

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Winter
(July–September) 1993, no 49
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Cover Nicola Woolford makes light of cold conditions near Mt Robert, Nelson Lakes area, New Zealand. *Chris Baxter*

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Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Established 1981

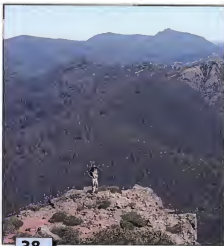
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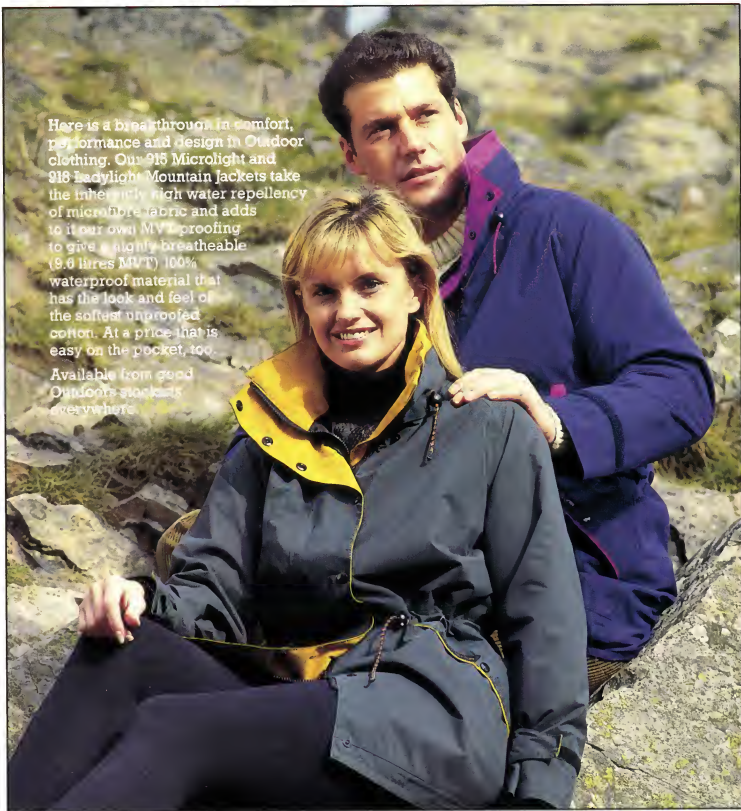
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SELLING OUR OWN FUTURE

Cutting back the native-forest logging industry

Fancy cutting down those beautiful trees...to make pulp for those bloody newspapers, and calling it civilisation.

Winston Churchill, Canada, 1930

Almost two-thirds of a century after Churchill's remark, it's still very much 'business as usual' in Australia. We are cutting down our native forests faster than ever before—largely to export as woodchips for Japanese paper. But today, it goes under the name of economic realism.

Over 43 years ago, in January 1950, the naturalist and broadcaster Crosbie Morrison, in an address to the Australian Institute of Political Science in Canberra entitled 'Education for Conservation', said:

...the removal of forests from rainy hillsides has given rise to devastating erosion by water, and...this same interference has converted an equable stream flow in our rivers to a disastrous succession of floods and trickles...The fundamental factor in soil conservation, and in water conservation, is vegetative cover...The steeper the slope, the larger and more dense must be the cover to achieve the desired results...we are not only teaching soil conservation; we are teaching forest conservation and water conservation at the same time. The three are inseparable.

Morrison was to repeat this message many times until his death in 1958. But as his biographer, Graham Pizzey, puts it in *Crosbie Morrison: Voice of Nature* (see review in *Wild* no 48): '...as we approach the end of the twentieth century when dryland salting is affecting increasing areas of Australia, we might remember Morrison's plea of over half a century ago to plant more trees on our catchments.'

According to conventional contemporary 'wisdom', however, 'there has to be a balance'. We need to 'harvest' our native forests to provide jobs, housing and paper. We need a strong economy so that we can afford to protect the environment—the implication being that logging our native forests will bring about a vigorous, environment-saving economy.

Such arguments smack of self-interest and will not stand up to closer examination.

They rely on a number of misconceptions.

Logging native forests does *not* provide substantial long-term employment that would not be generated by alternative industries (including timber plantations and tourism). Employment resulting from such production is *not* in the long-term interests of Australia generally. Furthermore, logging native forests is *not* the cheapest and most efficient method for providing housing materials and paper.

Employment is an important consideration of course. But it need not be generated by an industry that destroys our environment. Australia's wood-products industries are moving from processing native forests to plantations *already in the ground*. There are good economic reasons for this—plantation timber has both cost and quality advantages. According to Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) figures, plantation softwood *now* accounts for half of Australia's sawn-timber production and continues to displace native forest hardwood in the sawn-timber market. A report prepared for the Conservation Council of Victoria (Growth in the Victorian Timber Industry—Initiatives for Jobs in the 1990s) by Judy Clark, an independent consultant economist specializing in the wood-products industry, states that Victoria alone has well-developed softwood plantations on about 212 000 hectares of Crown and private land. During the 1990s, according to the report, these can support a tripling in softwood sawn-timber production, a 75 per cent increase from the current level of employment and the potential to supply about 80 per cent of Victoria's sawn-timber consumption.

Other Australian States also have large areas of softwood plantations that will mature in the late 1990s and beyond and will provide huge growth opportunities for plantation softwood sawmilling. But industry is hesitant to increase processing capacity, mainly because the States with large softwood plantations don't have enough industry to process thinnings from softwood plantations. As a result, thinning programmes are delayed (affecting volume and quality of future saw-logs); or plantations are thinned to waste; or the thinnings are exported as woodchips to Japan.

Major benefits—including jobs in wood-based panel plants and clean pulp mills—would be provided by the establishment of industries to process plantation thinnings, and pressure would be taken off disappearing native forests.

Government ought to address this issue instead of allocating resources to native-forest logging! Eucalypt pulp producers, too, prefer plantations where wood can be grown close to mills and which have ongoing opportunities to improve quality and cut costs. (Eucalypt plantations are being expanded in Australia by about 12 000 hectares a year.)

Japanese hardwood-chip buyers are looking for plantation sources of higher quality, particularly from the favoured tropical regions.

Thus industry's preference for plantation-grown woods offers a clear opportunity to



Chris ill equipped for deep snow (despite borrowed long johns!) on Travers Saddle, Nelson Lakes area, New Zealand, last January.

address the problems of native-forest logging while at the same time maintaining a healthy wood-products industry.

Yet the government continues down its short-sighted path, lowering royalties—now down to \$7.50 a tonne—in the attempt to retain Japanese buyers. Bob Brown claims that even at the old \$15 royalty, Tasmania has run up a \$500 million 'hidden debt' from sales, prompting him to describe the situation as 'a smash and grab raid...a fire sale of Australian native forests'.

Such subsidies promote export woodchipping, as the export of these products is dependent on their low price. (A 1991 study authorized by the Resource Assessment Commission has estimated that an increase of only ten per cent in the export price of woodchips would reduce long-term demand by between 40 and 80 per cent.)

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EDITORIAL

The contribution of native forests to Australian paper production is remarkably small. Figures from the Resource Assessment Commission's Forest and Timber Inquiry Report show that waste paper is the largest single source of raw material supply (37 per cent of input by weight) in Australian paper production. The rest comes from Australian-produced plantation softwood pulp (27 per cent), Australian-produced eucalypt pulp (mostly from native forests, but including some from plantations; 19 per cent) and other sources (17 per cent).

In Victoria, the pulp industry has proposed more intensive native-forest logging, which is the first step to *de facto* plantation establishment on native-forest land whereas all plantations should be established on cleared agricultural land—as was agreed to in the National Forest Policy Statement by the Federal and all State Governments (except Tasmania).

Logging native forests is heavily subsidized. The charges and royalties paid by the timber industry fall short of covering the cost of forestry planning and management services provided by government. What's more, there is no charge for the timber itself—for the public and on which it is grown. The Victorian Government lost almost \$40 million to the timber industry in 1989 alone despite a policy requiring a four per cent real rate of return on forestry expenditure. Even the Victorian Government's own figures on forest expenditure show that a substantial loss of more than \$20 million was made for the last two financial years.

ABARE estimates that the market value of standing sawlog timber is 33, 41 and 61 per cent greater than royalties payable in Victoria on A-, B- and C-grade logs, respectively, indicating that there is plenty of scope to raise sawlog royalties.

Another aspect of the timber industry's subsidization which was identified by the Australian Conservation Foundation is the economic impact of logging on water production in the Thomson catchment—a major water-supply catchment for Melbourne. A subsequent economic study, commissioned by the Victorian Government, found that to cease logging in the catchment would, over time, increase water-supply by about 15 per cent. Thus, at present, the timber industry is consuming 15 per cent of Melbourne's water-supply (worth over \$30 million a year) every year, free of charge—a cost that must be borne by Melbourne water consumers.

Nevertheless, the government continues to subsidize native-forest logging, to the detriment of existing plantations which must compete with subsidized wood products.

The community obviously places importance on biodiversity, landscape and amenity considerations, all of which are at their best in old-growth forests. Non-economic qualities include aesthetic values as well as the flora and fauna (much of which relies on old-growth trees for nesting hollows). But, with native-forest logging, habitat destruction continues without adequate study to determine what damage might be done.

It is worth noting that the RAC has made a firm recommendation that old-growth forest logging be phased out by 1995. The RAC has

said that the values of old-growth forests are both considerable and irreplaceable.

When native forests are logged, damage is caused by the logged area being opened up to motor vehicles which use the logging roads that remain after logging has ceased. This results in further pressure on the environment. Not only do these logging roads (and the problems they bring with them) last, but there is the question of the other detritus of logging that is frequently not removed: logging ramps, bulldozed piles of earth and waste timber, and rubbish including abandoned cable and fuel drums. More serious, however, is the problem alluded to by Crosbie Morrison in 1950—during the decades it takes logged forests to 'regenerate', their unprotected soil is steadily being washed to the sea, causing a host of other environmental and economic difficulties for others—future generations?—to worry about.

Government has a duty to manage Australian native forests in the public interest, and not just in the interests of the few. Let's see to it that they do just that.

Changing the guard

In *Wild* no 47 I announced that Nick Tapp was heading overseas on an extended trip after three and a half years in the Editor's harness. In that time he made an important contribution to the ongoing improvement of the standard of both *Wild* and *Rock*. Nick was the first Editor we employed, apart from myself. His great skill with language, attention to detail and specialist knowledge of skiing, climbing and equipment made him difficult to replace. I am happy to report, however, that we've been fortunate in obtaining the services of Sara White (yes, a *Wild* woman!) to fill Nick's shoes. A bushwalker with an outstanding record as a book editor, Sara comes to us with a determination, in common with the rest of us, to lift the standard of our magazines to new levels in the years ahead. She looks forward to your support.

Wild things

We have introduced a new *Wild* product which has no doubt been long awaited by many readers—clear plastic guidebook covers designed to fit the track notes and instructional guidebooks which now appear in every second issue of *Wild* and the climbing guidebooks which appear in every issue of *Rock*. These light, flexible, round-cornered covers will significantly prolong the life of your books in the field—where, after all, they are intended to be used. They are \$1.95 each, including packing and postage anywhere in the world. See the order form in this issue.

While on the subject of guidebooks, rock-climbers will be pleased to learn that we have reprinted four guidebooks to popular climbing areas from sold-out issues of *Rock*: for Sydney and the Sea Cliffs, Frog Buttress, Cosmic County, and Tarana. Complete with plastic covers, these are available from Wild Publications for \$7.95 each, including postage. ■

Chris Baxter

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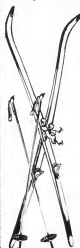


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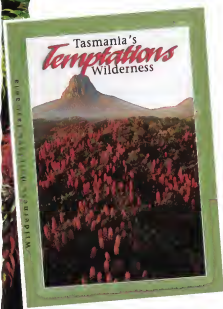
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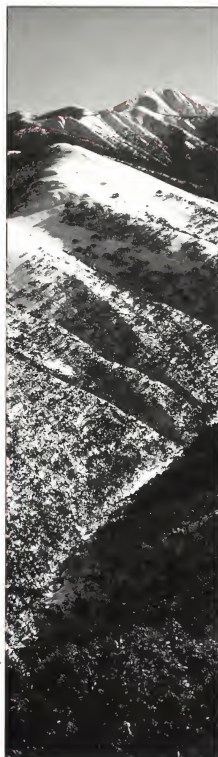


Photo Glenn van der Knaif



NEW SOUTH WALES

Canyons and climbers robbed

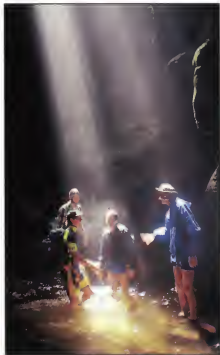
There is an element of danger in both rockclimbing and canyoning but those engaged in these activities now face a new risk. On 28 March, all cars at both the Mt York and Claustal Canyon car-parks, in the Blue Mountains, were broken into and robbed. Money and goods to the value of tens of thousands of dollars went missing. A motor bike was also taken. It was clearly the systematic work of professional thieves. Canyoners and rockclimbers who regularly use these and other car-parks in the region should beware.

Robertson to the 'bungles

In January, as a warm-up for his circumnavigation of the Norfolk Island cliffs (see above), Peter Treseder completed a 670 kilometre trip from Robertson to the Warrumbungles.

He ran, rafted and canoed the entire length of the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers, a distance of about 250 kilometres. Next, he canoed approximately 100 kilometres to Newcastle, where the sea kayak he used for the river descents and ocean section was buried. He then cycled roughly 320 kilometres

to the Warrumbungles, where he completed a solo climb of Crater Bluff. The route was Cornerstone Rib, which is graded 14. It is about 160 metres high. The trip took 105 (continuous) hours, including rests.



Recent thefts from cars parked nearby have added to the dangers of visiting Claustal Canyon, Blue Mountains, NSW. **Right**, evergreen Dot Butler at the 60th anniversary celebrations of Blue Gum Forest, Blue Mountains. David Noble

Dotty for Blue Gum

Veteran bushwalker Dot Butler joined celebrations to mark the 60th anniversary of the Blue Gum Forest in the Blue Mountains, which she helped to save in 1932. At that time, the 16.2 hectare reserve was bought by bushwalkers and gazetted as a public reserve. This marked an important stage in the development of the conservation movement in NSW.

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs organized a 'Back to Blue Gum Weekend' with a bushwalkers' campfire on Saturday night and a formal gathering and clean-up of the forest on the Sunday. Among those celebrating was Peter Treseder who—you guessed it—scaled 12 passes in the Blue Mountains on his way to the gathering. He took 18 hours and 18 minutes to cover a horizontal distance of about 100 kilometres and ascents and descents totalling 15 000 metres.

Classic paddle

For only the second time in its 16-year history the 1992 Hawkesbury Classic Paddle was shortened from 111 kilometres to 97 kilometres. Strong wind squalls against an incoming tide, between Spencer and Brooklyn, made officials concerned for paddlers' safety.

A record 561 paddlers from overseas and all parts of Australia contested the overnight event. Overall winners were the Sydney combination of Paul Lancaster, Simon Vibert,

Peter Tedesco and Steve Cooper. Austria's Elisabeth Bosina and Sydney's Kate Bevan scored a resounding win in the women's section.

The 1993 Classic will be held on 30-31 October. Sponsorship raised from this event will go towards research for the Australian Bone Marrow Transplant Foundation (see Wild Diary).



Reaching the heights

Held over the Anzac Day long weekend (24-26 April) in the Blue Mountains town of Mt Victoria, Escalade '93 was a resounding success. Wild Publications was a sponsor of this 'festival for the mountains' which was a triumph for its architect and organizer, young climber Lucas Trihey. (See the Wild Shot in No 37.) He was strongly supported by the local community.

About 1000 visitors paid to attend the remarkable range of activities which included lectures by Kim Carrigan, Jonathan Chester, Greg Child, John Ewbank, Dennis Gray, Lincoln Hall, David Hislop, David Humphries, Greg Mortimer, Brigitte and Jon Muir, Louise Shepherd, Peter Treseder and Al Warild—a list that reads like a who's who of *Wild* and *Rock* contributors! Visitors also had 14 films to choose from, including the premiere of *Baselimb*, a film of the highest BASE jump in the world by Australians Glen Singleman and Nic Feteris. Other attractions included photographic displays and a photo competition—won by Adrian Inch, with Matt Darby second, and Susan Wright third. Some of the best photos from this event (over 100 were received) will be published in *Wild* no 50.

Wild Diary

1993

June	19-20	ACF advanced and proficiency testing C	ACT	(06) 288 5610
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		Snoogame R	Vic	(02) 489 4029
	21-22	River rescue course grade II C	ACT/ NSW	(06) 288 5610
		Kangaroo Hoppet, Australian Birakeener, Joey Hoppet S	Vic	(057) 57 3103
	28-29	NSW 24-hour Rogaining Championships	NSW	(02) 665 4925
September	4	Spring 12-hour Rogaine	Vic	(03) 489 4029
	12	Aenes Kosciusko Tour S	NSW	(02) 638 7688
	15	Razorback Rush 10 km and 25 km S	Vic	(057) 77 5731
October	2	Spring 8/24-hour Rogaine	Vic	(03) 489 4029
		5 Stirling Silver Series Family Fun Race S	Vic	(057) 77 5731
	5-8	8th Outdoor Trade Show	ACT	(03) 482 1206
	15-16	ACF proficiency test C NSW		(02) 809 6993
	30-31	Hawkesbury Classic Paddle C	NSW	(02) 520 5634
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Trade displays were popular with the audience, but those aged under ten flocked all weekend to the ingenious artificial climbing wall mounted on the back of Stuart Willis's truck. The result was an ants' nest of writhing juvenile bodies climbing, prussiking and abseiling all over the remarkable structure. Undoubtedly Willis would be unanimously voted as 'King of the Kids' by every grateful parent within a 50 kilometre radius!

The highlight of the event, however, was the Australian National Sport Climbing Championship, held on an awesome, radically overhanging 16 metre Tower of Babel. This event was successfully staged by Philip Toomer and his well-organized Australian Sports Climbing Federation team. Elizabeth Illy narrowly won the Women's Intermediate event from Bridget Sheen (New Zealand) and Ana Hecceg. A nail-biting super-final was necessary for favourite Tara Sutherland to be declared winner of the Women's Open event, from Robyn Cleland and Annie Bermingham (NZ). The Men's Veteran event (for mere 'boys' over 40) was convincingly won by Paul Riviere from Mick Hopkinson and Peter Heiliger. An exciting super-final was also necessary to decide the Men's Intermediate event, which was narrowly won by Ben Ryan (NZ) from Julian Saunders. Matt Roper was third. The Men's Open event attracted a strong field including visiting hot-shots Chris Plant (UK) and Nick Sutter (NZ). However, veteran hardman Kim Carrigan had set a tendon-snapping grade-28 route that was to produce some upsets. Climbing last, Australia's most successful competition climber, Mark Baker, reached only 10.9 metres when, like all his predecessors, he was spat into space well short of the top. This was sufficient, however, to give him the win, by a very narrow margin, from Hira Verick and Suttor (equal), with 'unknown' Natimuk guide Hugh Widdowson a very credible fourth. Warwick Fox utterly confounded the pundits by coming a whisker behind, at fifth. Then, at the insistence of an audience sceptical of the route being possible, Carrigan gave an unscheduled demonstration climb of the route he had designed. After one fall on a low move that had perplexed many in the field, he blasted well past the winning mark before he, too, succumbed to the inevitable power of gravity. The crowd loved it. The various winners were presented with medals, sponsors' equipment and fat cheques by *Wild* and *Rock* Managing Editor, Chris Baxter.

VICTORIA

Underground cables go ahead

The State Government has decided to go ahead with the installation of underground cables from Mt Hotham to Dinner Plain through the Alpine National Park and has denied requests for an Environmental Effects Statement on this route. The Victorian National Parks Association has expressed concern that it has requested but not seen any justification for the cable's installation through the sensitive alpine area. It is also concerned by the haste with which approval has been given and the absence of public consultation. VNPA Director Doug Humann commented: 'Too often in the Alps we have seen developments proceeding without

adequate consultation or environmental assessment.'

Realigned track

A section of the Alpine Walking Track between Fingerboard Spur (Thomson Valley Road) and Firebreak Track (O'Sheas) has been realigned. For further information, contact the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources' Erica office on (051) 65 3204.

TASMANIA

Plans to limit access

Public seminars were held in Launceston and Hobart during February to discuss the draft walking-track-management strategy for Tasmania's wilderness World Heritage Area prepared by the Department of Parks, Wildlife & Heritage.

Proposals include limiting access to the Western and Eastern Arthur Ranges, in the heart of South-west Tasmania, to 100 bushwalkers a year. The aim is to control the deterioration of tracks, erosion and other environmental problems.

A two-year study by Martin Hawes, on behalf of the department, estimated that 1000-1500 people visited part of the Western Arthur Range last year, with another 600 people completing the five-day traverse from Moraine A to Moraine K. About 750 people tackled Federation Peak by the Eastern Arthurs during the same period.

Other proposals for the Western Arthurs include a plan to close the heavily used early exit off the range, Moraine K, temporarily to allow the track to stabilize. This would extend a round trip from Scotts Peak Dam at Lake Pedder by up to two days, with walkers forced to continue on to Lake Rosanne before they could leave the range.

South-west rescues

A female rafter survived a 20 metre fall down a cliff bordering the Franklin River in January with only a badly lacerated arm. One of the two men with whom she was rafting was dislodged from his raft in rapids and she climbed a cliff, near the Irenabyss, to reach him. She was airlifted to safety early the next day.

A French tourist was trapped with a broken leg near Mt Anne in the South-west for two days in January before being winched to safety by helicopter. Although heavy rain and temperatures as low as eight degrees made his wait uncomfortable, Terhierry Montole was well equipped and, in the French tradition, had a good supply of food.

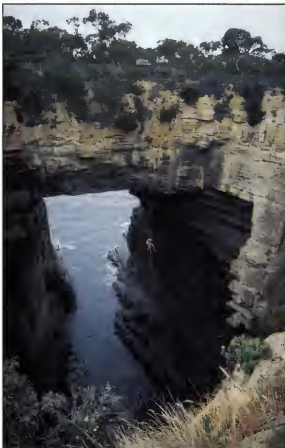
OVERSEAS

Everest fee peaks at \$US50 000

The Nepalese Government has increased the peak fee for Mt Everest from \$US10 000 to \$US50 000 and imposed a limit of one expedition a season on each of the three routes to the summit from Nepal. This action comes in response to criticism expressed at the May 1992 Conference in Kathmandu of the deforestation and rubbish accumulation in the Khumbu region.

In response, the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme has said it 'accepts

that in the present economic situation the Himalayan host countries (Bhutan, China/Tibet, India, Nepal, Pakistan) cannot be expected to forego such an essential source of badly-needed foreign exchange. But peak fees should be kept at a reasonable level, or the country concerned may find it is 'killing the goose that lays the golden eggs'.



Some people will go to any lengths to enter restricted wilderness areas. Stephen Bunton is seen here practising for such a contingency should Tasman Arch, south-east Tasmania, be so affected. Bunton collection

The 1991 increase in peak fees has already channelled climbers away from Nepal to other Himalayan countries. The UIAA is moving its 1993 International Training Camp from Nepal to India for economic reasons. Also, the hike in fees seems likely to discourage small climbing teams in favour of national and commercial expeditions with more porters, more base-camp personnel—and more pollution.

Rafting triumph

Australians repeated their 1991 winning performance to dominate the 1992 Hsiukulan River International Rafting Competition in Taiwan. Two hundred teams from around the world contested the 22 kilometre race, which is held as part of Taiwan's Spring Festival. ■

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Cities and coasts

In early 1993 the *Rainbow Warrior* visited ports from Western Australia to north Queensland by the south-east coast as part of Greenpeace's Cities and Coasts Campaign. The basis of the campaign is to make the general public aware that most problems faced by cities can be solved with existing technology and better planning.

The campaign tackles problems on four fronts: 1 'fresh air'; 2 'clean water'; 3 'healthy land'; and 4 'the world we share'. The solutions suggested by Greenpeace in each case are: 1 greater use of light rail, and better urban planning; 2 remove factories from the sewage system, recycle water from gardens and farms, and introduce composting toilets; 3 break the current reliance on pesticides; and 4 recycle rather than use plastic packaging. See Action Box item 1.

Insurers respond to global warming

The insurance industry is beginning to change its business practice because of an increase in climate-related disasters. In a Greenpeace report, 'Climate Change and the Insurance Industry', Jeremy Leggett catalogues the growing number of insurance companies pulling out of areas which could be at risk from climate-related disasters. When Hurricane Andrew hit Florida last year, it caused close to \$20 billion in insurance losses. Nine insurance companies collapsed in the wake of that hurricane and of Cyclone Iniki, in Hawaii, late last year. The Pacific region has been hit particularly hard. In the aftermath of Cyclones Ofa and Val—two devastating cyclones within less than two years—Western Samoa's only fire and general insurer, National Pacific Insurance, announced it would remove all cover once existing policies ran out.

Green jobs

A new Green Jobs Unit is to be established by the Australian Conservation Foundation. The unit will run a joint ACF-Australian Council of Trade Unions Green Jobs in Industry Programme. The purpose is to create green jobs with appropriate training, and employer assistance packages built around the needs of specific employers and selected from available assistance programmes. It is intended that the research-and-development work will build two data bases: resource and assistance programmes available to employers, and development processes for green jobs.

Coasts in crisis

At the same time as the ACF launched its Coasts in Crisis campaign in Sydney, an Australian Government report acknowledged that there is a 48 per cent probability of a major



The *Rainbow Warrior* at full sail. Greenpeace collection

tanker spill in Australia within the next five years, and that the accident rate in the Great Barrier Reef area is three to five times higher than anywhere else in Australia. Every year, over 200 tankers each carrying up to 100 000 tonnes of oil pass through the Reef. See Action Box item 2.

NEW SOUTH WALES

No advisory bushwalkers

The Confederation of Bushwalking Clubs in NSW has expressed its deep concern at the composition of the Blue Mountains District Advisory Committee. The committee, which advises on the management of Blue Mountains and Kanangra-Boyd National Parks, includes representatives of local councils, farmers, four-wheel-drive clubs and horse-riding operators.

The federation has written to the Minister for the Environment, Chris Hartcher, objecting to the lack of balance on the committee. The confederation pointed out that bushwalkers—not four-wheel-drive clubs, politicians or developers—raised the money to buy out the lease to protect Blue Gum Forest in 1932 (see Wild Information). The confederation questioned why a body

which has consistently made strenuous efforts to protect the park fails to have its nominee appointed when so many of those appointed have no commitment to National Parks and the objectives of the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Roger Lembit

Tinderry increase

The size of Tinderry Nature Reserve, south of Canberra, will increase by ten per cent with the State Government's acquisition of over 1000 hectares of surrounding native bushland. The additional land contains some significant swamps and old stands of *banksia marginata*—a species poorly represented in the existing reserve. Bushwalkers wishing to use the reserve should first contact the Queanbeyan District Office of the National Parks & Wildlife Service as access is mostly through private property.

Endangered

The Hastings River mouse has suffered a 95 per cent range decrease since European settlement. In fact, it was thought to be extinct before a 1969 sighting. A recovery team for the mouse has been established in accordance with the Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service's guidelines. It brings together a range of industry, scientific and conservation groups.

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New parks and reserves

An additional 86 851 hectares were added to lands managed by the NPWS in the past year, bringing the total area to 3 945 810 hectares, or nearly five per cent of NSW.

Cockle Bay Nature Reserve is a small estuarine wetland on Brisbane Water near Gosford, with tall blackbutt forest, casuarina woodland, mangroves and salt-marsh. Nattai National Park stretches from Mittagong to Lake Burrigorang. Four new State Recreation Areas associated with Nattai now extend Sydney's green belt: Nattai SRA; Yerranderie SRA on the western shores of Lake Burrigorang; Burrigorang SRA, which includes Burrigorang Walls; and Bargo, which covers the southern corner of the Nattai area.

flooding of Blue Mountains parks and the Kowmung River will not proceed under any of the options. See Action Box item 3.

KL

VICTORIA

Too little but not too late

The Victorian National Parks Association has described the Land Conservation Council's Central Highlands National Park as inadequate. The LCC has largely ignored high value conservation areas in State Forest by failing to reserve them as National Park along with the Melbourne Water catchments.

Eighty-nine per cent of this park is three Melbourne Water closed catchments;

nature conservation in the Central Highlands. See Action Box item 4.

Loss in timber

In an interview for the *Age*, Resource Minister Geoff Coleman reported a \$7.6 million loss in the timber industry and admitted that this loss is likely to continue to cost taxpayers million of dollars. Fenella Barry, Victorian campaigner for the Wilderness Society, said in response: 'East Gippsland forest operations ran at a 3.7 million dollar loss in the 1990/91 logging season; this is the largest for all forestry



Walkers on the lower Kowmung River—an area loved by generations of New South Wales bushwalkers and now under threat from flooding. **Right**, Kowmung Gorge in mist, and the Wild Dog Mountains. David Noble

Warragamba dam plans leaked

A leaked letter from the Minister responsible for the Sydney Water Board, Robert Webster, to NSW Premier John Fahey has forced the Premier to announce plans for a new dam at Warragamba. The letter indicates that the Water Board is considering ways to limit flood damage downstream from the dam and, in the long term, wishes to retain the option of increased water-storage at Warragamba. In the letter, Webster seeks Cabinet approval for an arrangement whereby he would concur with plans of management for Blue Mountains, Kanangra-Boyd and Nattai National Parks. The National Parks Association of NSW has stated that this would be contrary to the National Parks and Wildlife Act and effectively hand control of the parks to the National Party.

Increased storage would flood significant areas of the proposed Blue Mountains World Heritage Area including the lower Kowmung River canyon and the Gangerang Gorge of Cox's River. Conservation groups have sought an assurance from the government that

Maroonah, O'Shannassy and Upper Yarra. These are linked by small areas near Lake Mountain and the Acheron River headwaters. VNPA Director Doug Humann recently commented: 'The small links which are proposed are inadequate and ignore the main findings of ecological research; that conservation reserves should be large and contiguous. Small links lead to fragmentation of habitat and do not adequately recognize the overall habitat requirements of our fauna...We have a great opportunity to create a world class National Park within easy reach of Melbourne but if the Proposed Recommendations are implemented this opportunity could be lost forever.'

In addition, the LCC recommends National Park legislation to cover the closed water catchments and Lake Mountain along with National Park status for French Island. Another proposal by the LCC is that exploration and extraction for mining and petroleum be excluded from parks and reserves, including flora and fauna reserves and marine reserves.

The VNPA is now in the process of more fully assessing the Proposed Recommendations, and the accompanying Social and Economic analysis and documents (it was previously denied access under Freedom of Information), to estimate the implications for



operations in Victoria. To continue to subsidize forestry operations which have proven themselves to be uneconomical, unaccountable and woodchip driven is outrageous.' (See this issue's Editorial.) See Action Box item 5.

Mining in iron-bark park

Environment Minister Mark Birrell has granted a mineral exploration licence application for an area of iron-bark forest in Chiltern Park in north-east Victoria. Chiltern is a 4250 hectare box-iron-bark forest which supports 11 species of vertebrates listed as threatened in Victoria and is of State significance for five of these and of national significance for the endangered regent honeyeater. The VNPA is urging the Minister to upgrade Chiltern to a State Park. Director Doug Humann said, 'we can ill afford to have the spectre of mining hanging over the only reasonable example of this forest type reserved in Victoria'. See Action Box item 6.

Have your say

The Department of Conservation & Natural Resources has invited community input to the North East Forest Management Plan. The plan will apply to over 700 000 hectares of native forest and will: 1 plan for the range of forest uses (timber production, recreation, grazing); 2 lay down prescriptions and standards for forest management; 3 set the direction of future management and establish a ten-year framework for action. See Action Box item 7.

Green Web strategy

The VNPA is seeking information about groups and individuals interested in being part of the Green Web strategy—designed to guide the DCNR's corridor-planning process. The aim is to establish a network of groups



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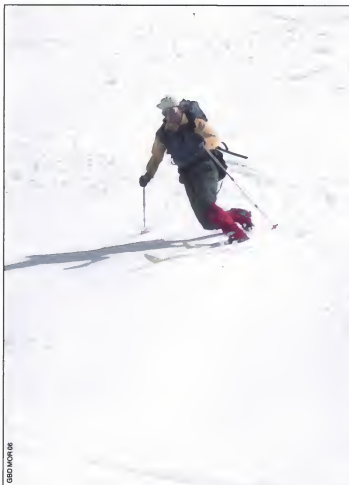
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and individuals to make community expertise and knowledge accessible to the department while also providing a way for local (environment and other) groups to comment on corridor planning in their area. See Action Box item 8.

Donna Buang compromise

Conservationists were forced to compromise when Australian Paper Manufacturers decided to log land it owns on the lower slopes of the Donna Buang Range. The VNPA and the Upper Yarra Conservation Society objected to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, partly on the grounds that the local planning scheme did not allow timber harvesting on the land. The Upper Yarra Shire Council subsequently amended the planning scheme to allow APM to take timber from its land, a move which the

conservation groups accepted rather than have the company apply for a declaration of pre-existing user rights. If granted, this would have given the company almost total control over the use of the land; as it is, a management plan is being prepared and a flora and fauna assessment done. More details are in the VNPA's newsletter for November 1992.

concern in Australia and overseas. In 1992 the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, called for the enactment of enforceable and effective environmental laws, including the provision of sanctions designed to punish offenders, obtain redress and deter future violations.

Action Box

Readers can take action on the following matters covered in Green Pages in this issue.

1 For further information on the Cities and Coasts Campaign or any other aspect of Greenpeace, including membership, telephone (008) 81 5151.

2 For copies of the 'Coasts in Crisis' facts sheets, contact the ACF Information Officer—telephone (03) 416 1166. Letters asking why oil tankers are permitted into a World Heritage Area can be sent to: The Chief Executive Officer, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, PO Box 1379, Townsville, Qld 4810.

3 Write to the NSW Premier opposing any flood protection or water augmentation schemes which would result in the flooding of National Parks in the Blue Mountains.

4 Write to the Land Conservation Council, 477 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000 and urge them to enlarge and make continuous the proposed Central Highlands National Park. If you wish to help to fund the appeal, send donations (tax deductible) to the VNPA.

5 For further information on forestry operations in Victoria, contact Fenella Barry at the Wilderness Society—telephone (03) 670 5229.

6 To demand protection for Chiltern's rich flora and fauna and to urge for a Land Conservation Council review of ironbark woodlands, write to Hon Mark Birrell, Minister for Conservation & Environment, 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne 3002 and/or your local member if you live in the north-east.

7 If you would like more information, or to be involved in the North East Forest Management Plan, contact: North East Management Planning Project, Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 1 McKoy Street, Wodonga, Vic 3690—telephone (060) 55 6111.

8 If you would like more information about Green Web, or are interested in responding to the Green Web survey, contact Charlie Sherwin at the Victorian National Parks Association, 10 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, Vic 3002—telephone (03) 650 8296.



This quarry (to be 'regenerated', we are assured) has been made near the Bluff in Victoria's Alpine National Park in order to upgrade the four-wheel-drive track to the controversial Bluff Hut. *Stephen Hamilton*

Conservation guidelines

As part of a new campaign (Tread Lightly), the DCNR has released a series of pamphlets setting out guidelines for use of trail bikes and four-wheel-drives in parks, forests and reserves. Also released are a bush-camping code and a guide to campsites, 'Camping in Victoria' which includes a map showing all public land. Information and publications are available from all DCNR offices.

Roads on Mt Stirling

A new four-wheel-drive road has been bulldozed into Craig's Hut and a sign erected saying, 'Your 4WD levy at work', apparently by the DCNR. A Mansfield four-wheel-drive club is 'rebuilding' the hut, that is, making it into a real hut instead of a facade for the movie cameras. (It was constructed as part of the set for *The Man from Snowy River*.) However, the Mansfield DCNR ranger knew nothing about it and is reported to be disgusted.

TASMANIA

Environmental crime

Crimes against the environment, such as pollution, have been the subject of increasing

An Environmental Crime conference will be held in Hobart on 1-3 September to examine how environmental crime can be detected, prevented and sanctioned. Expressions of interest should be sent to Sandra McKillop, Conference Unit, Australian Institute of Criminology, GPO Box 2944, Canberra, ACT 2601—telephone (06) 274 0223.

Exit Cave recycled

In the week leading up to the March Federal Election, the issue of mining at the Benders Limestone Quarry was raised once again. Members of Huon Residents Action Group occupied the quarry and began removing limestone to use as fertilizer on the apple farms of the Huon valley. Again, they claimed that the ban on removing limestone only applied to Bender. They called on the Liberal Party to reverse the Federal Labor Government's decision to stop mining in the World Heritage Area, should it be selected. Luckily for the sake of Exit Cave—one of Australia's longest caves, this didn't eventuate.

The protest fell flat when representatives of the local mariculture industry also arrived at the quarry claiming that the protesters were all members of the Liberal Party and that their actions were just a political stunt. The oyster farmers were upset at the policies of both the Tasmanian Liberal Government, which had hurt their industry, and the policies proposed by Fightback, which would further undermine their business.

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Rehabilitation of the site is scheduled to begin in May after a recent agreement was reached between the Tasmanian and Federal Governments. The Tasmanian Government has agreed to fund the rehabilitation and the Federal Government will pay the compensation. A strategy for the rehabilitation is now under discussion.

Stephen Buntin

On trial

Another quarrying debate is soon likely to emerge. Western Red Mining holds an exploration lease (covering 30 square kilometres) for the removal of granite in a picturesque glacial valley leading down to the west coast at Trial Harbour. The smooth, rounded-rock outcrops which characterize this valley are *roches moutonnées*. They are the only granitic examples of this type of landform in Tasmania.

The Minister for Mines, Tony Rundle, has granted a mining lease (covering five hectares) to allow the company to assess the market potential of the stone. In a cost-cutting measure it has chosen to blast the top off the most accessible knoll to provide samples for clients. No doubt, when mining begins it will also be done in the cheapest and most accessible place and therefore be unsightly and damaging. Already the blasting has spoiled the integrity of the valley.

The Department of Mines holds a security deposit to allow for rehabilitation.

SB

Jarosite waste

According to Greenpeace Australia, a mining company has refused to state a date by which it will comply with the London Dumping Convention and cease the dumping of tonnes of jarosite waste at sea, south of Tasmania. Greenpeace stepped up the pressure when a group of demonstrators blocked the dump ship's departure from the dry-dock slip in Hobart in March. The ship normally makes one trip every 19 hours to the dump site.

OVERSEAS

Malaysian justice?

According to the Australian Conservation Foundation, in July 1992 a Malaysian High Court found that ARE (Asian Rare Earth, a joint venture between a Malaysian company and Japan's Mitsubishi) was releasing radioactive waste and toxic chemicals into a pond and river in Bukit Merah. ARE was ordered to close operations. But ARE filed an appeal in the Supreme Court of Malaysia and applied for a suspension of the court order pending a hearing of the appeal. This was granted and as yet no date has been set for the appeal hearing.

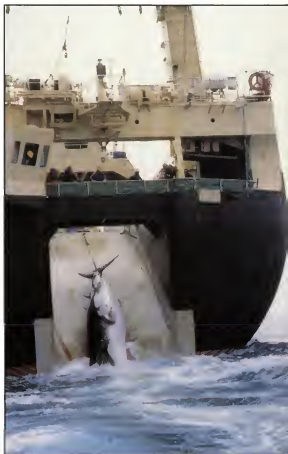
An article in *Habitat*, February 1993, records that when ARE set up operations in 1982 workers were virtually unaware of the dangers and no information or protective clothing was provided for those working at the plant. At the July hearing the judge found that, before 1985, ARE was 'negligent by throwing radioactive waste in wanton and callous disregard of the health and safety of the people staying in the vicinity'. Children in the village now suffer from leukemia at a rate 42 times higher than the national average.

GREEN PAGES

Toxic levels of lead are found in many children and the incidence of miscarriage and infant death is abnormally high in the community.

Whale hunt continues

As reported in *Wild* no 48, the Japanese whaling fleet is still hunting in the proposed whale sanctuary in the Ross Sea, Antarctica. The whaling fleet's factory ship, the *Nisshin*



Harpooned minke whale being taken aboard a Japanese whaling ship—for 'scientific purposes', no doubt. *Greenpeace collection*

Maro, has been seen in the area. Japan claims that the fleet is hunting whales for 'scientific research'. Is sushi a science?

Nuclear neighbours

Indonesia plans to build a 1000 megawatt nuclear reactor on Java according to Greenpeace Australia. Reportedly, the Indonesian Government believes that it cannot meet its country's energy demands without nuclear energy. According to Greenpeace, the reactor is being sold by Mitsubishi on a build-operate-transfer operation whereby Mitsubishi pays for and builds the reactor, recoups its investment within ten years and then ownership reverts back to Indonesia. Based on fall-out readings from the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, Australia would be contaminated if an accident occurred. ■

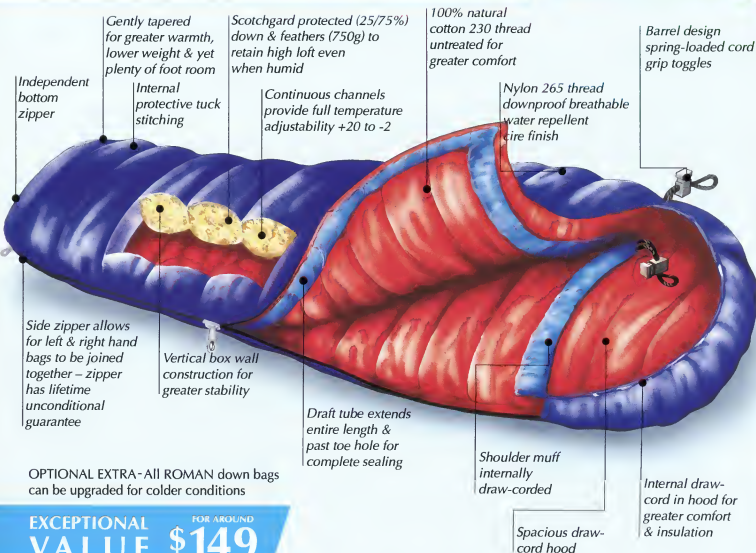
Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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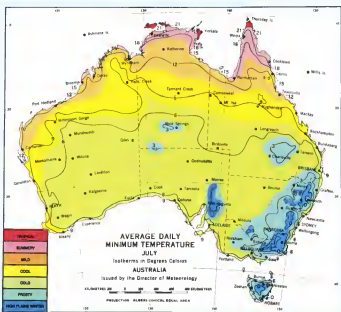
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FINDING YOUR WAY IN POOR VISIBILITY

When the going gets tough, which way do the tough start going?
By Stephen Bunton

I have often seen school children arrive for outdoor education activities with compasses hanging round their necks, tied tightly as if never to be removed. As parents bid farewell, they ask me to take care of their children and I often say: 'Don't worry, they won't get lost!'. Parents invariably reply, 'It's okay, they've got the best compass money can buy'. I am too polite to tell them that a compass won't do them much good if they can't use it.

A compass is part of the gear most people see as essential but which, like jumper leads and avalanche transceivers, few know how to use properly.

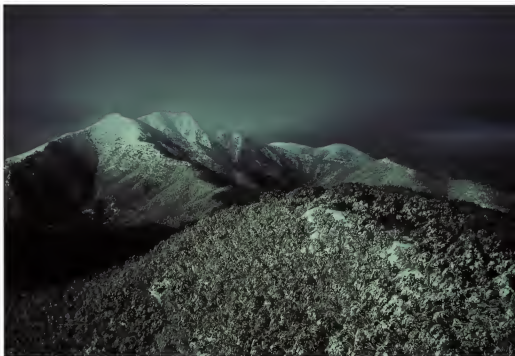
I rarely navigate with a compass but I never know when I might be called upon to use it and when I am, I know that it will be in a situation where I am playing for keeps.

This article assumes that you have bought a compass; read the instructions; spent time learning how to use it to orient a map; can set and follow a bearing; and can find your position. These are essential skills. Another skill which is not quite so critical is to be able to identify 'that mountain over there' by taking a bearing on it. This and orienting the map are the uses to which I put my compass most often.

By way of contrast I use my map quite a lot, in fact almost constantly. I navigate by the 'know where you are at all times' principle. This principle depends upon being able to find your position, keep track of your progress—meaning your rate of travel—and then recheck your position as opportunities permit.

To navigate like this you need to familiarize yourself with all the symbols on your map. Travelling on tracks makes this process easier and remaining above the tree-line, where landmarks are clearly visible, reduces your chances of getting lost. These are, however, pretty much strategies for the fair-weather bushwalker! What do you do when you are bush-bashing, the weather closes in or the track gets covered in snow? Canyoners, ski tourers and mountaineers are likely to face these navigational dilemmas more often than casual bushwalkers; much of this article is therefore of greater relevance to them. The hints described here were learned from experiences in these activities.

The first problem when bad weather engulfs you is to overcome a certain reluctance to get the map and compass out of your pack. You may think stopping is a hassle; you'll waste time, feel cold and the map will only get wet, then destroyed by use. These hurdles can be overcome with a little self-discipline and



Even at night Mt Feathertop, Victoria, can be an unmistakable landmark. Glenn van der Knijff

advance planning. If the weather looks dubious, have the map handy so that you don't have to rummage through your pack. Have your compass already tied on to a string so that you can wear it round your neck. Don't worry too much if the map gets ruined during the trip; it's easily replaceable (you are not!) and far cheaper than losing a day's pay if you are overdue on your trip or—worse still—the cost of search and rescue.

The best trick I've learned is to cut up the maps I use most often into about A4 size sections and laminate these. In fact, I bought two copies of the same map and cut them up in different places so that I had useful overlapping sections. For a 1:25 000 map this may be costly and inconvenient. Many people easily walk across the whole map in the course of a day, let alone tackle an A4 section. I started laminating maps back in the 1:100 000 sheet days and still find them satisfactory. Certainly you can see well beyond the area covered by 1:25 000 maps and this limits their use for 'the name of that mountain over there'.

Laminated micro-maps are durable, fit easily into your pocket and are more likely to

get used under difficult circumstances than pristine paper sheets. They can also be held in one hand in orienteering style with the edge of the compass placed along the route and the grid lines aligned with those in the bubble of the compass.

So the weather has clapped out, the visibility is poor and chances are it's blowing a gale. The first step is to plot a sensible course. You may still be in the tent, in which case my advice is to stay there and read a book or otherwise amuse yourself for the day. If you have to move, consider the life-threatening implications of your actions. From the moment you leave your shelter you could be at risk from exertion and hypothermia. Beating a path headlong into the teeth of a blizzard is hardly prudent. You should avoid disorientation which requires the expenditure of extra energy for correcting your mistake. A long and strenuous escape route is also undesirable.

The last thing you want is to get lost. Know where you are at all times! If in doubt consult the map; you should be able to work out where you are. I've often heard—and sometimes used—the malapropism 'insult the map'. Almost invariably the map is right and I am wrong. If you can't work out where you

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are, retrace your route on the map and look for possible sources of error. Did you come down the wrong ridge? The next step is a hypothesis and testing procedure. 'If we did come down that ridge, we would be on a bearing of, or we should drop into a creek soon.' Make sure that it is sooner rather than later. If you can't easily check where you are, retrace your steps to a point where you did know your exact position. Again, calculate the energy expenditure of this procedure, but do not just aimlessly wander around in circles.

The best course to follow in bad weather is one with plenty of short legs and recognizable landmarks so that you can continually monitor your position and check your progress. This boosts morale and allays all those fears of 'where are we?' and 'how much further?'. Always take the easiest route; follow ridges, contour round hills and avoid swamps, but take your exposure to the wind and the need to avoid dense vegetation into consideration.

If the navigation is tricky, you will need to follow a compass bearing. This sounds simpler than it is. Most people assume that they can do it without any problems but rarely do they manage it in a manner suitable for travelling in white-outs or green-outs. It is indeed more difficult than you first expect and is a skill worth practising with a variety of navigation exercises which can be found in books on basic navigation.

The most publicized method of following a compass bearing is to set your compass, pick a distant object on that bearing and then walk towards it. The problem with this method is that when you really need to use your compass for navigation, chances are that you can only see about ten metres and everything within that radius looks the same. The way to overcome this difficulty is to abandon the idea that the leader has to carry the compass and follow the bearing. Let the person behind carry the compass. The principle here is that the follower sets the bearing by sitting on the person in front and regularly instructs the trail-blazer to 'go left', or 'a bit to the right'. This method works well in a mountaineering situation where people are roped for crevasse travel and the second can sight along the rope. It even works for alpine stairs plodding across dark névés on moonless nights. The problem is when you have to side-step crevasses. Don't ask your partner to step into a crevasse while you have your head down reading a compass by torchlight.

If you are following a compass bearing in a bushwalking setting, you are constantly side-stepping trees. The person in front can correct for this by passing one tree on the right and the next on the left and the errors should cancel each other out that way.

The basic tenet of poor visibility navigation, then, is to keep track of your errors and identify potential sources of error. Certainly errors can be minimized if the individual legs of the chosen route are short. If you have tried to follow a compass bearing, you will know that the compass has a limited accuracy. It is easy to be up to ten degrees out. This means that over a 100 metre leg you could be displaced by as much as 10 metres on either side of your destination. Over longer legs you could easily walk past your objective and not

WILD IDEAS

see it if visibility is only ten metres. People have lost their snow-caves and igloos in this fashion.

The answer to this problem is to count your steps. This is a very tedious exercise but it is the best advice you can follow when navigation becomes difficult. If the need to do mindlessly long slogs arises, it can help to pass the time and create those artificial landmarks necessary for morale—but it does require a lot



Not too many landmarks here! (Lake Mungo area, New South Wales.) Andrew Marshall

of concentration. The other purpose it serves is to define your position more precisely. It eliminates those conjectural discussions of 'can't we have come more than a kilometre?'. Once you have set your bearing and are following it, you can do some helpful checks.

Whenever you are contouring you will have a feel for the angle of the slope. Should this change radically, it will alert you to the fact that something is not quite right. If this is the case, it is time to check the map again. Similarly, you can feel your angle to the wind. If the wind appears to have changed direction suddenly, it is most likely that either you have changed direction or the terrain has changed. You may be cresting a ridge, approaching a saddle, or the wind might be swirling round an outcrop of rock. Be alert to these subtle changes. If the sun is partly visible in some portion of the sky, your angle to it should remain constant for any compass leg. The sun angle and wind direction change only very slowly in relation to your change in position or changes in terrain.

The best way to learn effective navigation under conditions of poor visibility is by frequent practice. This doesn't mean that you engage in a multitude of epics over the next few years but it does mean thinking about navigation any time you are off the beaten track. Don't be content to be led. Involve yourself in the navigation and decision-making process on any trip. Many people cannot navigate simply because the last time they just followed along or 'someone else was driving'. Who knows? The next time you have to undertake that practical exam in navigation it may be a case of risking severe consequences if you get the answer wrong. ■

Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in Wild no 6) is Wild's Contributing Editor for caving. An experienced walker and climber, he has visited many parts of Australia and several overseas countries to pursue these interests.

T*RIBULATION*





Rugged rain-forest walking in tropical Queensland, by Lois Padgham

Adelaide, one cold evening in June: a small group, all intrepid explorers, muse over a travel-worn map of Cape Tribulation. The map, commandeered by Rick from a colleague who had walked in the region, showed an approximate pencilled route. It went over Mt Pieter Botte (Nulbullulul), followed river systems to Thornton Peak and then out to Thornton Beach and the Cape Tribulation road. Rough track notes such as 'avoid'—with an arrow pointing to some innocuous looking rocky outcrops east of Mt Pieter Botte—intrigued us. We all agreed: we'd have to go there!

About 3000 kilometres further on, extremely fatigued, we were dropped off at the Cape Tribulation 'Village' backpackers' resort. We grabbed a meal and the only available cabin, which was situated next to the bar area. Repetitive disco noise, 'how llllow can you go', combined with loud encouragement to quaff beer, continued well into the night.

The next day, with packs fully laden for a five-day foray into the rain forest, our 'gang of five'—Richard, Meg, Tim, Ruth and myself, all attired in the latest leech-deterrent Lycra bike pants and old army gaiters—set off, definitely *not* refreshed, for the peace and tranquillity of nature. Instead of starting at Pilgrim Sands camping ground, as had the donor of our map, we walked north-west directly from the village to the ridge which leads right to the Cape.

I felt apprehensive on entering the densely vegetated forest. Previous tropical Queensland experiences involving leeches, slippery rocks, huge eels, green tree ants and wait-a-while loomed foremost in my memory. However, once under the cool, green canopy and engaged in battling gravity, I soon forgot my fears. As a reward for reaching the ridge-top, we downed a sustaining lunch of pitta bread filled with avocado, pickles

Rain-forest tranquillity? The campsite, among melaleucas, beside the aptly named Roaring Meg Creek. All photos Lois Padgham

and cheese. The leeches came to lunch as well.

The walk up the ridge was pleasant despite the steepness and lack of recent practice in wearing a hump. A breeze kept the temperature down and we enjoyed the vegetation as it changed with the altitude. Churned-up patches of bare



Backing out of a tricky situation, Meg descends from Mt Pieter Botte. **Right**, Mt Pieter Botte, dubbed Leunig's nose, seen from rocky outcrops on the ridge.

earth along the track indicated the presence of wild pigs, the elusive scourges of the rain forest.

After climbing to an altitude of 640 metres, the ridge narrowed to no more than a metre with precipitous drops on both sides. From an exposed rock outcrop a vista of wind-pruned vegetation, with an occasional emergent palm, flowed down to the tiny buildings and fields of the township and out to the blue, blue ocean studded with white coral islands and reefs. It was one of the few views we were to see on this walk.

The landscape finally flattened out as dusk was approaching. We ignored a reasonable campsite hoping for a better one further on. Not so. After filling our water-bottles from the headwaters of Mason Creek we searched for a place to camp—accompanied by the delightful flashings of fireflies. A short distance away we found some small spaces and set up tents around roots, spiny tendrils and pig hollows and called it home.

The first highlight of the following day was a huge three-dimensional rock maze covered with lawyer cane, moss, epiphytic plants—and now also with bits of skin and Lycra. Once we managed to get out of the maze, a feat which would have done Houdini proud, we followed a creek for almost a kilometre to Roaring Meg Creek.

The difference in atmosphere between the dark, closed rain forest and the light openness of the creek clearing was amazing. At last we could see into the distance. The intriguing profile of the summit of Mt Pieter Botte, dubbed Leunig's nose, appeared out of the low clouds. It looked enticingly close.

After setting up our tents among the melaleucas alongside the aptly named 'Roaring' Meg, we swam, lounged about and then decided to head for the summit. We set off at 3 pm, obviously too late for a serious summit bid. We crossed the creek and followed a compass bearing of due west through a fairly open understorey for about 300 metres.

It was here that we came to the dreaded 'rocky outcrops' we were supposed to avoid. Their edges dropped vertically away to thick, spongy fern and sedge vegetation around the base. The temptation to climb them, to discover why they were to be avoided, was irresistible. We felt released from claustrophobia as we ascended one of the red-brown monoliths with the deep fissures formed by the many streamlets draining through the rock. We passed beautiful bonsai gardens cradled in round hollows and marvelled at the uplifting views of Mt Pieter Botte, of the places where we had just walked and also of Mt Hemmant to the south.

At the top of the outcrop, we again entered the forest past stunted vegetation and headed upwards for a short distance before turning back at half past four.

Somehow, we became entangled once again in a three-dimensional boulder maze in a steep creek-bed with the ground ten metres or more below. Another offering of skin and Lycra before the rock deity deemed fit to release us by way of a tunnel. We followed the creek immediately to the east of the mountain down to Roaring Meg and the safety of our campsite.

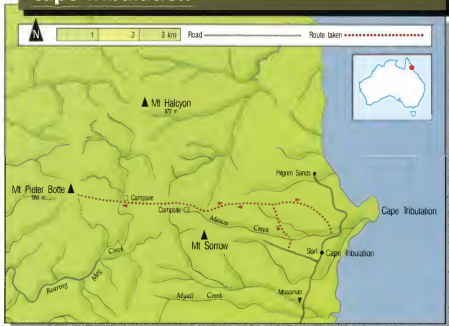
Our slow progress had made it obvious that we were not going to get within cooee of Thornton Peak and that our best plan would be a day trip up Nulbululul. We were determined not to be trapped by the boulders again.

The summit bid began with yet another sacrifice of skin (Tim's), this time a gashed shin on slippery rock while crossing Roaring Meg. We retraced our steps of the previous day to the rocky outcrops, up on to the exposed rocks and into the forest. An easy ridge led up to a small saddle, then a short distance further a final rock scramble, a squeeze and, we were as high as we could get. The imposing mountain's nose was even more impressive from just below the nostrils and the views to the south-east and north-east were stunning—the unattainable Thornton Peak jeering at us from its dense forest surroundings.

After a photo session we descended slightly and ate lunch on a precarious east-facing ledge while enjoying the view. We later learned from Lawrence Mason (son of an ex-logger turned tour guide) that Mt Pieter Botte once formed part of the boundary between the territory of two Aboriginal tribes who used to live in the area. They were all rounded up and taken to the mission at Bloomfield in 1948.

The easy ascent had lulled us into a false sense of security. As we descended, yet another boulder area loomed before

Cape Tribulation





us. I had crawled down a fairly steep cave and was watching the others as they followed, each negotiating the difficult descent in his or her own way. Meg turned to face the rock and as she did so, slipped and fell. Ruth, almost directly below her, instinctively put her hands out to catch Meg. On the way to the ground, Meg pushed Ruth's hand against the cheese-grater rock, grazing it badly. The main worry was the base of Meg's spine but, as two huge yellow and purple bruises later revealed, she had landed neatly on her buttocks. It was a sobering experience for all of us and sharpened our awareness of the things that can happen in remote areas.

The welcome rocky outcrops proved to be not so welcoming after all. We had

come out on the wrong one and were not sure whether it would lead to the ground by a ramp or a vertical cliff. Now we understood why the emphatic 'avoid' had been placed on the map. Back into the forest. Two more rocky outcrops before we were on the right one and heading back to camp.

It was quite a shock to find that there were people at our camp. They had lost their compass a couple of kilometres back but were hoping to climb the peak. We related our experiences and lent them a compass.

An increasingly inquisitive rodent scurried about in the shadows as we cooked our meal that night. Then Roaring Meg once again lulled us into a peaceful sleep.

It took much less time to return to the coast and we were back at the rock look-out for lunch. Eagle-eyed Tim found the lost compass dangling from a branch on the way. The ridge down appeared much steeper than we had remembered. Right near the bottom, a huge area of wait-a-while vine detoured us slightly. Finally, we emerged on to the road about half a kilometre north of the fast-food shop at Cape Tribulation. People we passed stared at us as though we were aliens.

Back at the 'Village', we already reminisced fondly about our wilderness adventure. However, not having reached our target, Thornton Peak, some disappointment remained. In this atmosphere, we began to plan our next wild adventure to 'the best place in the world' according to Ranger Pat. He meant Cedar Bay, just north of Bloomfield. Our enthusiasm grew over several jugs and we later had great difficulty erecting our tents. ■

Lois Padgham lives in south-east Queensland and works for the Lamington Natural History Association, conducting environmental education camps for primary school children. She has walked extensively in Australia, New Zealand and America and is actively involved in most rucksack sports.

Cape Tribulation —some facts

Situated midway between Brisbane and Cape York, Cape Tribulation is on a lovely section of coast along Queensland's Great Barrier Reef.

Access

Cairns, the nearest major city, is about 1700 kilometres north of Brisbane on the Bruce Highway. From Cairns, it is about 85 kilometres north to Mossman along the main road. Continuing along the road, you'll come to the town of Daintree 40 kilometres further on. Before Daintree, however, there is a turn-off to the right to Cape Tribulation. After about five kilometres along this road you'll reach the Daintree River, and the ferry on which you cross it. The ferry operates daily between 6 am and 6 pm, with additional operating hours on weekends. Once across the river, it is a further 35 kilometres to Cape Tribulation. Take care on this road. Although suitable for conventional vehicles, it can be difficult to drive after heavy rain. There is also a bus which operates from Cairns to Cape Tribulation.

Facilities

Cape Tribulation has many amenities for the traveller. There are hostels, bars, restaurants, take-away food shops and a camping ground in this increasingly popular area.

Best time to visit

As in other regions of northern Australia, the climate is tropical and thus it is hot and humid in summer—this time should probably be avoided. The most suitable time to visit the area, particularly for bushwalkers, is between May and October.

Maps

The best map for the walk described in this article is the 1:50 000 sheet titled *Thornton Peak* produced by the Royal Australian Survey Corps. Also of use, particularly for the drive in, is the 1:100 000 AUSLIG map titled *Mossman*. ■

A full-page background photograph of a person standing on a rocky mountain peak. The person is wearing a hat and light-colored clothing. The background is a vast, deep valley covered in dense forest, with distant mountain ranges visible under a clear sky.

HIGH SUMMER IN VICTORIAN ALPS

Off and on the beaten track in trying conditions, by *Trevor Lewis*



THE

WILD BUSHWALKING

There were real heat-wave conditions on 30 November. But here, among the tree-ferns and tall timber of the West Buffalo valley, the abundance of green gave at least an illusion of coolness. The hard-baked surface of the fire track which climbed steeply towards the crest of the Main Divide looked, by contrast, distinctly uninviting.

Thus I decided to postpone the hard slog until later in the day. I parked my touring bicycle out of sight from the main track, chained it to a tree, unpacked the panniers into my rucksack, and sat down in the shade at the water's edge for a long lunch break.

Running water was a luxury I would soon leave behind for the high and dry ridges; the 'water-starved Barry Mountains' as guidebook guru John Siseman dubs them. One might think that a strange description for a mountain region which must receive well over a metre of precipitation annually, yet it is not far from reality as a previous Barry Saddle-Mt Speculation traverse had shown.

This time I planned to broaden the picture by including Mt Howitt and the Crosscut Saw, turning the tour into an extended version of the classic circuit. But already my enthusiasm was wilting. Would the heat continue? Yesterday's weather report had held out hope for a cool change during the next few days. None the less I had brought plenty of warm and weather-proof clothing. I had a water-carrying capacity of three litres.

It was almost five o'clock, the shadows were lengthening, but the heat seemed as fierce as ever. Slogging up the track, I caught my first glimpse of the real mountains, the Viking and the Razor, rising like craggy islands from a sea of forested foothills. They disappeared as the track turned on to the east slope of the spur; I reached Barry Saddle and found that the rain-water tank, hidden among blackberry thickets nearby, was full to the brim. Should I go further? The ready water-supply persuaded me to stay.

A patch of grass beside the track made a good place to unroll my sleeping-mat; the tent seemed unnecessary and it stayed in my pack. As I lay down, the mosquitoes made their presence felt. I rose and lathered myself with repellent, then tried to get to sleep. I fell into a doze, but was rudely awakened by a cavalcade of four-wheel-drive vehicles rumbling past only a metre away from my bed.

Near the summit of the Viking, looking over the Razor to Mt Cobbler: 'mountains...rising like craggy islands from a sea of forested foothills'.
Chris Baxter

Fortunately, that distasteful incident wasn't repeated.

I opened my eyes to the first day of summer. It was pleasantly cool at five o'clock in the morning; my sleeping-bag was slightly damp from the dew. I drank plenty of tea and water before packing and setting out. I filled all my containers from the water-tank and signed the log-book, then strode out along one of the few 'walkers only' sections of the Alpine Walking Track, pleased that the itinerary I had planned would steer clear of roads and fire tracks for most of my time in the mountains.

The foot track led steeply uphill through head-high scrub, then levelled out on to a narrow ridge in an open forest of alpine ash. Already the heat was building and it hit me as I started the very steep climb to the ridge of the Viking. Loose and rocky underfoot, or carpeted in crackling-dry forest litter, that east-facing scarp caught the morning sun and beamed it back at me. A couple of minor rock-bands caused the track to zigzag

not-so-hot conditions enabled me to spend time up there. I drank a lot of water and looked across the vast Wonnangatta headwaters to the ramparts of Mt Howitt. A few snow-drifts draped the east slope of its summit plateau. Would they still be there when I arrived? My pack felt heavy, as it always does on a first day out, and I did not feel enthused anticipating the hard work ahead.

The sun had regained command of the sky, making the sparsely shaded summit area an uncomfortable place to be. I headed for the south summit of the Viking, descending through thick scrub and then across easier snow-grass.

I reached the saddle between the two summits and began to look for excuses not to go further. It was still early in the afternoon, but the prospect of camping high to enjoy the sunset and the cool breeze had great appeal. Was I simply justifying laziness? One way to settle the question was to find out whether this potential campsite had a water-supply. I grabbed the water-bottle which I had



Welcome shade in the saddle between the Viking and the Razor. **Right**, another high summer in the Alps, Chris Baxter on the Viking, looking to the Razor. Chris Baxter collection

before a large cliffline, forming the edge of the hogback, called for a search; I sighted a cairn, and hoisted myself through a gully to reach a sloping rock platform. Far away in the haze I could see Mt Feathertop and Mt Hotham, complete with snow-drifts which were, no doubt, melting rapidly.

Ahead of me lay a gradual but complicated ascent to the Viking's summit. In spite of familiarity gained on the previous trip, I lost the track now and then as it meandered and undulated, sometimes almost reaching the crest of the ridge, at others dropping far below it to avoid thickets of tea-tree and non-negotiable rock formations.

A spread of high cloud had drawn a veil across the sun by the time I reached the summit cairn. The cooler, or at least

emptied on the way and headed into the gully on the south side of the saddle.

The gully dropped very steeply. I descended for some distance. Then a small cliffline barred the way. Was it worth going on? A damp patch on a slab below the dry waterfall convinced me that it was.

Why I had not brought all my water containers with me was a pointless question now. I had descended so far that it was not worth climbing back up to get them. I found a break in the cliffline and continued the descent.

Another cliffline intervened. From here I could see down to where snow gum gave way to alpine ash. I could also see a tributary gully converging on the one I was in. A belt of tea-tree lining that watercourse suggested that I might be near my goal.

I headed up to outflank the cliffline. I strained to hear the sound of running water but only heard the wind in the

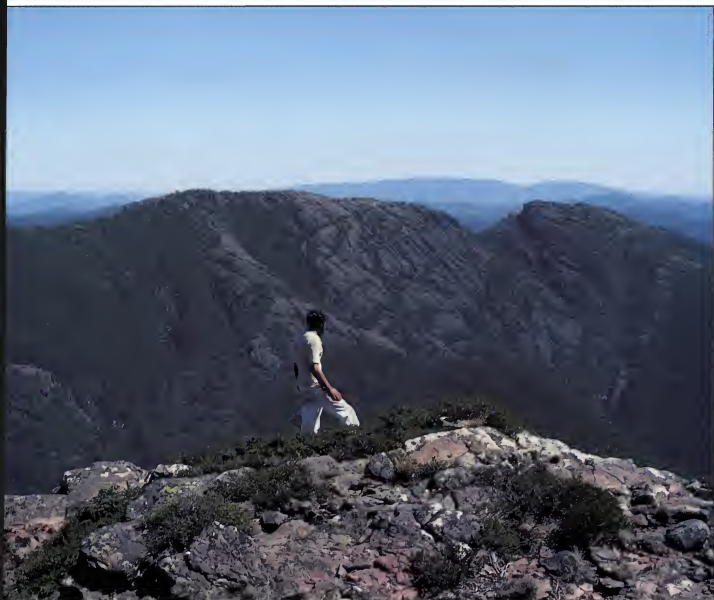


tree-tops. My imagination conjured up visions of thundering waterfalls and deep, deep pools into which I could dive. What I finally found was a tiny pool fed by a trickle. A swarm of mosquitoes rose from the water's surface. I had a drink, filled my bottle, and started the long climb back to the saddle.

Whether to make this my camp for the day was no longer a question. After investing so much effort to establish its suitability, how could I abandon it?

On the sun-baked snow-grass flats of the saddle I put up my tent, settled in the shade of a log and tried to read but too many mosquitoes distracted me. Relaxation seemed out of the question; I decided to make another expedition to the water source. So that this could be my last trip, I took my 'kitchen' with me. Down by that water-hole I built a small but smoky fire to keep the mosquitoes at bay. I cooked a meal, had many cups of tea, and lazed away the rest of that hot afternoon.

The next morning found me striding up the rock-banded grass slope which led to the south summit with a renewed



sense of purpose. Here I turned away from the usual route into the Wonnangatta by way of Blue Hills to follow a more direct spur south-east. It started as a scarp-edged hogback, a smaller version of the Viking's main ridge. Its eastern fall offered easy enough walking in open snow-gum forest but staying with the rocky crest provided more scenic excitement.

Entering alpine ash, the spur began to spread out and visibility was reduced. For a time I felt vague about my position, but I located the crest again before straying too far and followed it without further difficulty.

After a long but unexpectedly quick and easy descent, I slipped and skidded down the last steep incline to reach the thickly vegetated valley floor. To add to my satisfaction, the sky was overcast; the day was warm and slightly humid, a great change from yesterday's furnace-like heat. It started to drizzle as I emerged on to the disused and overgrown logging road which would lead me to the foot of the spur by which I planned to reach Macalister Springs.

Many river crossings later, I reached my take-off point and halted for lunch. The drizzle had stopped but the cloud continued to keep the heat down nicely. I wondered what difficulties lay ahead. Impenetrable scrub? Impassable cliffs?

I found none of those; instead, a shapely spur soon appeared and led me up in pleasantly open forest. Passing showers kept the air cool and moist, and without sun to torment me I enjoyed the changing scenery as I ascended. Alpine ash gave way to snow gums; sections of rocky crest alternated with grassy clearings.

At a false summit the spur turned at a right angle and led across a causeway overlooking a sweep of cliffs and rock-banded grass slopes. The Devils Staircase and the Crosscut Saw loomed close. After a good rest I set out to finish the day's work.

On that last uphill stretch the vegetation was a nuisance for the first time; a sprawl of ageing grevillea slowed me down considerably, but the top was not far away now. I reached it; the steep ground gave way to flats, and I walked

through snow-gum glades carpeted in purple-flowered hovea shrubs to the Macalister Springs Track.

The sun made its first and last appearance for the afternoon, hanging low in the western sky, soon to be hidden by cumulus cloud. A freshening wind and the sound of distant thunder made me hurry on. I had just put up my tent near the Vallejo Gantner Hut when the deluge started. The wind howled, the rain pelted, the thunder deafened, the lightning dazzled. The storm lasted only half an hour and was over as suddenly as it had begun. As the thunder receded, a cold fog settled over the mountain.

Morning came, and with it the realization that I was no longer alone. Several tents occupied the scenic flats overlooking the Terrible Hollow; two parties were using the hut, one of them teenagers who had tried to camp near the summit of Mt Howitt. They had been driven off by the thunderstorm and arrived at the hut by torchlight.

Everywhere the signs of heavy traffic could be seen; wide, eroded tracks and sawn-off branches among the snow

gums. Ironically, nature had added to the devastation in the form of much fallen timber, aftermath of the winter blizzards of 1990. As a result, walkers not using stoves can now look forward to an ample supply of dead wood for years to come.

So much for the foreground. The backrack made thoughts of the thousands of people who had been here before me fade into insignificance. Tier upon tier, the cliffines rose and fell; streamers of mist floated in the depths of the Terrible Hollow. I felt that I had seen it all before, and of course I had, in magazines, calendars and coffee-table books. I'd had similar feelings on arriving at Tengboche Monastery on the trek to Everest Base Camp. Then as now, I wished that I could have arrived 50 years earlier.

I took to the track and followed it across the narrow neck which divides the headwaters of the Wonnangatta and Macalister Rivers, and up on to Mt Howitt's summit plateau. I dropped my pack near the picturesque and much-photographed snow gums at the tree-line and made a side trip to the summit and West Peak of Mt Howitt. The alas no longer pristine splendour of the central Victorian Alps spread out in all directions; in the distance Mt Buller's high-rise apartments glistened in the morning sun; nearer at hand, the clear-felling extended from the King River headwaters to the cliffs of the Crosscut Saw. 'Development' had damaged, but not destroyed, the views.

I retrieved my load and headed north along the Alpine Walking Track as it threaded its way over and round the many bumps of the Crosscut Saw. It soon became apparent that despite the cooling effect of last night's thunderstorm, this was going to be another scorcher of a day. The updraught rising from the depths of the Terrible Hollow brought with it a blast of eucalyptus vapour and the odour of superheated vegetation and forest litter.

At least the well-imprinted track relieved me of navigational responsibilities and made it easy to enjoy the finer features of the traverse. Even the climb out of Horrible Gap did not seem horrible, but was a varied and interesting progression culminating in a scramble through a series of rock steps separated by terraces of lush alpine herb field.

Before I knew it, I was standing on Mt Speculation's summit. On my previous visit to this mountain I had seen the view at sunset and sunrise. Now, in the glare of early afternoon, the vast and rugged landscape looked different somehow; flatter, with no deep shadows to highlight the relief. Even at this altitude, it was not pleasant to sit in the sun; I descended the ridge running east from the summit and arrived on the flats at the head of Camp Creek.

A clump of snow gums promised to cast a good shadow as the afternoon

progressed, so I put up my tent there. I ventured into the valley to collect water, and when I returned two well-equipped walkers had just arrived and were setting up camp nearby. They had come from the other side of Mt Magdala that morning and were walking from Mt Buller to Mt Bogong.



Another scorcher! Rocks radiating heat on the Crosscut Saw. Chris Baxter Right. The updraught rising from the depths of the Terrible Hollow brought with it a blast of eucalyptus. Paul Sinclair

I spent most of the afternoon avoiding the sun, and then headed out to enjoy as much of the ridge-top views as the remaining daylight allowed. As the sun dipped towards the horizon, the temperature dropped and finally it became cool enough to put on a woollen shirt. After I had returned to camp, I spared a thought for the sweltering masses on the plains and in the cities below. How privileged I felt to sit soaking in the cool while watching the light of a haze-filtered sunset turn range upon range of the Victorian Alps into an endless display of hard-edged and softly coloured silhouettes.

In the small hours, a boisterous wind started to worry my tent. The wind-chill made me feel quite cold when I rose at first light. That and a sky full of cirrus raised hopes that a cool change might be on the way. Still, the heat had conditioned me by now and I wasted no time getting ready to hit the track.

The Buller-to-Bogong boys overtook me as I descended towards Catherine Saddle. The track divided over the edge of the scarp; the wind dropped and the temperature rose. Hopes of a cool change receded. However, I could look forward to the still shaded west-facing climb on to Mt Despair.

Carpeted in flowering herb field, the initial steep rise out of the saddle led into snow-gum woods with an understorey of scrub. The gradient eased and I reached the plateau which forms the

summit of this not very inspiring mountain. At its north-west margin the track came close to a cliff-top which afforded a glimpse of the Catherine valley's maze of interlocking spurs, edged on one side by the Cobbler Plateau and by the escarpment of the Razor on the other.

A little later I descended steeply and soon encountered the first outcrop of the dissected slabs which break up the south-east fall of the Razor's long summit ridge. These features present an imposing spectacle but make navigation very difficult for the walker trying to traverse the mountain. I wonder whether there is a consistent pad on this sector of the Alpine Walking Track. Or were the traces I followed made by others just as confused as I?

Early on, I made a fundamental mistake by following a well-beaten pad which strayed too far below the skyline, became indistinct, and then vanished. Ahead of me lay a deep gully full of intractable vegetation. I needed to gain height fast and I took to the slabs. With their gigantic fissures and hedged about by thickets of tea-tree, those frustrating purple-tinged conglomerates held endless surprises. Sudden sheer drops and faces just too steep to scramble up safely prompted many changes of direction. Hectares of rock surface radiated the heat unpleasantly, and it was heavy work to find a way through that enormous labyrinth.

A large and permanently shaded rock crevasse provided unexpected relief. I climbed into it and felt as if I had entered an air-conditioned building from a hot city street. I dropped my pack, uncorked my water-bottle and luxuriated.

To motivate myself to leave this retreat and engage again in strife and struggle was difficult. Several wrong turns later I located the track. It quickly led me away from the slabs and down into a young alpine ash forest.

One of the guys had told me that it took ten minutes to reach the water. Not surprisingly, it was a long ten minutes. Many fallen logs and a dry waterfall or

I returned to the saddle and put up my tent. The heat had abated to a gentle

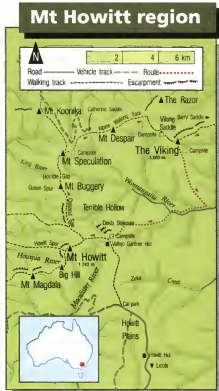
Without much scenery to distract me, I pushed on and arrived at Barry Saddle. As I trudged down the fire track towards

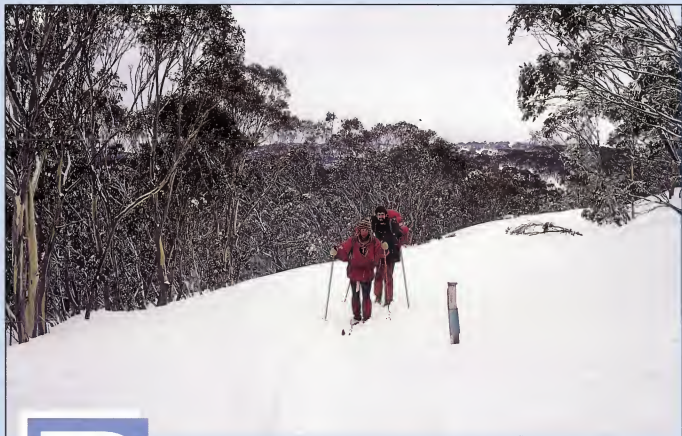


The climb to the summit of the Viking on the shaded north-west slope of the mountain was not unpleasant. From the cairn I could survey the entire high-level route I had followed since leaving Mt Howitt. A couple of dirty snow-drifts remained on the east slope of that mountain. They had shrunk dramatically since I had first sighted them three and a half days earlier.

My bicycle awaited me in the riverside undergrowth. I wheeled it on to the track, loaded it up, and propped it against a tree while I cooled off in the river. Then I pedalled off down the track. Shrubs and tree-ferns whisked past at exhilarating speed. It felt very different from walks which end with a slamming of car doors; a gradual rather than a sudden re-entry into civilization. I would spend one more night in the bush; tomorrow I'd reach the first farms, then a bitumen road, then the town of Myrteford, the highway, Wanggaratta—people, traffic, cold drinks, newspapers. For now, all I looked for was a shady place near a swimming-hole to sit out the hottest part of another extremely hot day in the heart of the Victorian Alps. ■

Trevor Lewis (see Contributors in *Wild* no 1) lives in Canberra, where he has worked in a variety of jobs. He is a keen writer who has written of his walking experiences in Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.





BAPTISM OF ICE

The ski-touring epic *Quentin Chester* had to have

We strode away from Mt Hotham on a sharp, breezeless morning. Sun shone on the throngs of skiers shuffling contentedly along the ridge to Mt Loch. On such a day it seemed that the worst possible misfortune might be to miss out on a summit photo or to discover a melted Mars bar in your pocket. Had someone suggested that this was a place of lurking peril one would have checked the contents of their water-bottle. Never mind that we were sitting on a pile of rocks that commemorated another skier's demise. After all, I thought, that had happened long ago. It couldn't happen to us. Not to me. Could it?

The year was 1974 and at the age of 17 I was out on cross-country skis for the first time. It all seemed very jolly. And it would have stayed that way had we joined the mob for a day trip to Mt Loch. Instead, we were on a ski traverse from Mt Hotham to Falls Creek. When you said it quickly, it sounded simple enough. I was blissfully ignorant of the topography between these resorts but it didn't matter: I was young, keen, and travelling in esteemed, adult company.

We had driven up from Harrietville the day before. My brother Jonathan had coerced his ageing VW wagon up the side of the mountain while Terry Prime fed the cassette player. As we swept through the towering ash forest, the car was filled with the sophisticated sounds of George Golla on guitar.

Only occasionally did I have to stem the slide of exotic equipment stacked to the roof behind me. Being climbers, Terry and Jonathan had shiny new Karrimor Joe Brown packs, the highest tech in 1974. My gear was stowed in a rat-gnawed Flinders H-frame rucksack which clocked me from behind every time the wagon lurched into a hairpin bend.

We spent that night camped refugeestyle on the concrete floor of the Nordic shelter. As darkness fell the bare walls glowed orange with the spluttering flame of Terry's choofer. With impeccable timing, another Joe Brown appeared in the doorway just as dinner was served. Somewhere under the pack was the fourth member of our party.

His load hauled down to the ground, John Nitschke rose to his full statuesque

height. Except for the French ski pants and no pointy red cap, he could have been a fugitive plaster figure from a suburban garden. Still, he looked remarkably fresh for someone who had just walked most of the way up from Harrietville with a load twice his size. John was a climber, too.

Setting out the next morning I felt slightly awkward on the new skis. After a snack and a drink at Derrick Hut we began our descent. I was still fumbling with my bindings when the others flew off down the slope and into the trees. A series of snaking tracks led into the far distance where I could hear strange moans and guttural cries.

For the first 40 metres I was a study in elegance, gliding confidently down the gentle gradient. Only the last 300 metres proved difficult. The slope dropped away alarmingly. In the fragments of seconds it took to reach terminal velocity I whistled past a series of deep craters in the snow. At the same moment I registered these depressions, my skis struck a minuscule ridge of ice. That was enough to catapult me skywards. I

landed with a minimum of grace, my limbs splayed apart to form a perfect star. I felt like a sky-diver who'd been tossed into a pavlova. And everything in front of my eyes was white.

Damage control reported all appendages intact. It took longer to diagnose that the weight pressing my face into the snow did not portend a spinal fracture but was the steel top-bar of my H-frame. In the meantime a wet sensation was creeping up my jeans—it was cool enough, fortunately, to be attributed to external sources. I unknotted my skis and poles, stood up and dusted off the little snow that hadn't already soaked into my clothing.

Ahead, a fellow crater-maker emerged from the gums. Though liberally camouflaged in white, this figure had to be Terry: even ankle-deep in snow he cleared almost two metres. He was carrying his skis under his arm in the skier's classic signal of surrender. This seemed an honourable strategy so I did likewise and lumbered down out of the trees to the edge of the snow-line.

John was reclining on the grassy bank of the Cobungra River. He greeted us with an elfin grin. Snow-crystals were melting on the tassels of his Peruvian hat. This and the steam rising from his sleek nylon ski pants suggested that he, too, had spent a good part of the descent de-accelerating in the prone position.

We sat in the sun staring ruefully at Terry's right boot. During one of his 'turns', its upper and sole had parted company. It now hinged like the jaw of a model hippo. Before we could agree that it was beyond repair, Jonathan appeared, cradling his skis in his arms. I looked down at his boots: they were still complete units. Then he reached into his japara pocket and pulled out a binding. Splinters clung to the mounting-screws. He waved airily towards the hill: 'The bail's buried somewhere up there.'

Ever cool in a crisis, John suggested the only sensible course of action: 'Well, let's have some lunch.' Terry strode off to nearby Dibbins Hut to light the stove for a brew. The rest of us followed. As we dumped our packs and skis on the grass, Terry burst out from behind the hessian bag that served as the hut's door, waving a ski boot above his head. 'Look what I've found', he shouted. 'And it's the right size, too!' Jonathan brushed him aside and darted into the hut, presumably looking for a replacement ski with binding attached.

He returned brandishing an ancient hammer and a handful of bent nails. He stood on his ski and drove three nails into the welt of the boot and down through

the ski's tender top sheet and wood laminates. John and I winced as he took off the boot, with ski now permanently attached, and bashed down the steel points protruding through the ski's sole. This was a three-pin binding, Jonathan style. The skis were, of course, rented.



Terry, stylish in his tweed wool breeches, with Quentin Chester, a jumper worn casually over his soggy cotton skivvy and soppy Levis. **Opposite**, the year was 1974; setting out with high hopes and brand-new Karrimor Joe Brown packs. *Quentin Chester collection*

Inside the hut Terry stood bent over the stove still shaking his head in disbelief. 'A size-ten right boot just sitting up there', he said, pointing with his Swiss Army knife to a shelf crammed with odd tins and stray mittens. The hut was dark and musty; whole logs lay horizontally to form the walls. There was a dirt floor and a communal bed running the width of the hut. Anyone taller than one and a half metres had to stoop to move. John and Jonathan appeared to be right at home. It was all very rustic. I expected Bogong Jack to appear at any moment.

A night in the hut was a foregone conclusion. The others went to gather firewood while I changed into dry togs. My skis may have survived the descent

but I felt as though I was clad in an outfit from the House of Wettex. I peeled off my soppy Levis and soggy cotton skivvy. In their tweedy wool breeches Terry and Jonathan looked as if they had wandered in from a grouse shoot, but at least their teeth weren't chattering.

We had dinner by the open fire before I crawled on to the bunk and had a bash at Patrick White's *The Tree of Man*. However, reading of chilly nights in rude bush shacks was more than I could handle in the circumstances. I peered out through gaps in the log wall above my head: a sky decked with stars.

By morning the view through this peep-hole was of low cloud and floating snow turning to rain before it reached the ground. After a night in front of the fire my jeans were warm but still damp. We shouldered our packs and ambled through the wet grass by the river. In minutes my boots once again felt the texture of sodden cardboard. The drifting rain oozed through my spray jacket. As we inched along a moss-covered log spanning the river, I consoled myself that even if I fell into the tumbling waters I couldn't possibly become wetter.

On the other side of the river the only way forward was up—very steeply. The

others strapped their skis to the sides of their Joe Browns.

But when I tried to do the same, it didn't help much. My skis poked up so high that they snagged branches, releasing clumps of heavy snow which splattered on to my head. In the end I carried the skis under one arm, which left only one hand free to grab bunches of grass when my treadless ski boots skidded beneath me.

Above the snow-line the going became even more treacherous. If I put my weight on the uphill foot, the snow would tend to form a stable platform. But just as often it would give way, my foot would strike a bush and I would topple

snout first into the snow. My H-frame each time enlarged the bruise on the back of my neck. At least I was spared the ordeal of breaking the trail; John did most of that. But the different length of our strides meant that I usually had to plug a new set of steps.

gloom. I creaked along behind. Once again snow began to whirl down out of the darkening sky. I had long since lost any interest in what was happening to those in front. When they halted to check the map, I stood slumped over my ski poles.

Mt Hotham to Falls Creek

Facts for cross-country skiers

Access

Mt Hotham is 367 kilometres from Melbourne by way of Bright and Harriettville. The Harriettville approach, while still notorious for its exposure to bad weather, is much improved since Quentin Chester's trip in 1974. It is now sealed all the way. Bad weather can still close this road, however—in 1981, this approach was shut for 14 consecutive days. If this access is closed, Mt Hotham can be reached by way of Balmisdale and Omeo.

Parking

Overnight parking is not permitted at the Mt Loch car-park in winter. Instead, cars must be parked by the road near the club lodges at Devonport (one kilometre east of Mt Hotham). A free bus operates between Dinner Plain ski resort and Mt Hotham providing transport from your car to the Mt Loch car-park. Parking for two nights costs about \$22 at present. Add around \$8 for each additional night. Remember, too, that suitable chains must be carried to Mt Hotham throughout winter, and fitted when directed.

For a full update on road and snow conditions, phone (03) 11 545 (Melbourne) or (057) 59 3531.

Dibbins Hut

About five years ago Dibbins Hut was demolished and a new log structure built in its place. Still known as Dibbins Hut, it offers shelter from the elements but tent accommodation on the lovely snow-plane in the vicinity of the hut is more comfortable. The hut's elevation is 1370 metres and snow conditions can vary considerably. If you want good snow here you'll find that July, August and early September are best.

Further information

The ruin of the original Youngs Hut is not obvious in summer; in winter it is impossible to locate. However, a pole line leads to the 'new' Youngs Hut (it diverges from the main Hotham-Bogong pole line at pole number 267), which offers shelter but is rather ill-conditioned. This hut is situated at the head of a beautiful plain and sheltered campsites abound.

Map

The best map for this trip is the Vicmap 1:50 000 sheet titled *Bogong Alpine Area*. It is printed in full colour and the reverse side includes some brief track notes, Bogong National Park information, and maps of Mt Hotham, Falls Creek, Bright and Mt Beauty. ■



For once, skis could be worn as they were intended. Right, sitting out bad weather—cards, tea, latex-style pancakes, climbers' tales and curative Drambuie. *Quentin Chester*

Higher up, we sank more deeply into the snow. My jeans felt icy and uncomfortable. We stopped for a snack in a cluster of straggly gums. It was only mid-afternoon but the light had gone. We were enclosed in cloud the colour and temperature of day-old dishwater. There was talk of a hut nearby.

The others stood in an earnest huddle over the tattered map while I tried to rub some feeling into my feet. Had it been possible to tip them into a glass, my toes would have made clinking sounds. Tired and bewildered, I consoled myself with the knowledge that I was in the capable hands of climbers. In the huddle I could detect compasses, a map, and only minor disagreement about where we might be. Surely the cosy cabin could not be far away.

The terrain eased. For the first time in over 24 hours it was feasible to use the skis as they were intended. Well, it would have been feasible had my legs not been grinding with cold like a pair of rusted pliers. The others skied off into the

We came into a clearing with a stockyard. 'This is the spot', said John. I waited while they had a look about. 'According to the map we're in the right place, but there's no sign of any hut', said Terry on his return. All but one of the yard's wooden railings were buried under snow, yet even my untutored eyes could see that there was no hut. So we skied on into the night. I found myself succumbing to fantasies of sand and sun-drenched beaches. We circled the yard in widening loops that only served to confirm the futility of it all. I began to fall for the most trivial reasons. I had an insidious urge to corral myself in the yard, curl up on the snow and sleep. After the third or fourth lap I simply sat down in the snow and started to shake.

When Jonathan eventually skied back and asked me how I was doing, I mumbled something idiotic like 'I'm fine, I just need to rest up for a bit'. Somehow I was goaded on to my feet and led to the protection of snow gums. A tent had already been pitched, the stove was alight and Terry was rigging up shelter using a couple of groundsheets.

I was bundled into the tent. Even cocooned inside two sleeping-bags there

was no relief from the shivering. Jonathan handed me a cup of vegetable soup. I sat up feebly and took small sips, trying not to shake the contents of the cup over the bags. After a few moments, I felt stricken and queasy. I lunged towards what I thought was a doorway. It was a mesh window. Before I could crawl to the entrance, the soup frothed back up my throat and was everywhere. I slumped to horizontal, closed my eyes and prayed that the end would be swift.

I woke to movement around me. It was still overcast but the cloud had lifted enough to create some semblance of daylight. Every limb and joint in my body ached. I felt as though I had been poisoned. My gut was hollow and raw. But despite this evidence to the contrary, it seemed that I was alive.

Outside there was the sound of a crackling stove and of voices. Terry was stamping around in the snow muttering oaths and gnawing on his last square of chocolate. He had spent a sleepless night swaddled in his groundsheet entombed by a plastering of fresh snow.

The others packed while I stood by, sipping black tea and nibbling a Ryvita. John returned from a recon with news that he had located the SEC shelter, the other hut in the neighbourhood. 'It's just over there', he said, pointing to another collection of snow gums. 'It's only about 90 metres away.'

My first steps on skis were a nightmare. Only the thought of a blazing fire kept me going. This time John's optimism wasn't misplaced. The hut was ridiculously close to our bivouac spot, almost within spitting distance. No one can ever have been more grateful to see a building.

The hut may have lacked the bucolic charm of Dibbins but with a fire lit and

wet gear festooned across the rafters it soon took on a homely, if fetid, air. And so we passed the rest of the day eating, dozing and reading. I was initiated into the climber's art of 'sitting out bad weather', a skill the others had perfected during their summers at Mt Cook. This consists in a more or less continuous card game interspersed with mugs of tea, platefuls of Jonathan's latex-style pancakes and talk of all the grand climbs one could have been doing had the weather not been so foul.

As the afternoon wore on I was also introduced to the curative properties of

In the morning the cloud had begun to pull apart, exposing patches of sky like blots of blue ink overhead. We made leisurely traverses down through the gums to Dibbins. For once the snow was crisp and I remained upright on the skis. After lunch by the Cobungra, we plodded up the spur towards Hotham. It was heavy going but I was grateful to bask in the reflected glow of a clear, still afternoon.

On the ridge were radiant views across the Kiewa River to Mt Feathertop. The climbers gazed at its heavily corniced summit. Near the memorial cairn John



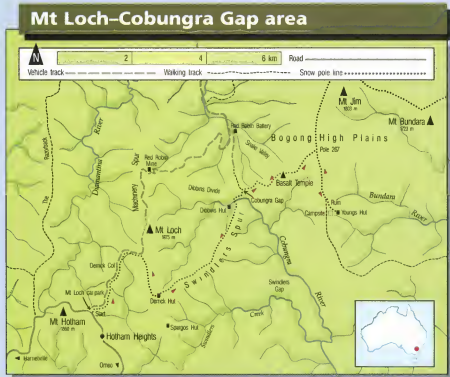
Terry's Drambuie. To my adolescent palate, it tasted like cough mixture. It had the welcome effect, however, of erasing the memory of my indiscretion in his tent the night before. By evening we made the collective decision that a retreat to Mt Hotham would be our most sensible option.

got talking to three other skiers returning from Mt Loch. He told them of our search for the hut and our 'night out'. An updated map was produced, printed in bright colours. We scanned the sheet until our gaze settled on the level ground near the stockyard. There, in the space between the contour lines, was one word—Ruin!

Skiing into Hotham all I could think of was food. My teenage brain was swamped by visions of steaming pies and buckets of chips. I had no inkling that those three days would become so clearly signposted on that landscape we call memory. I didn't imagine that henceforth the sight of any cairn would trigger a chill of foreboding. Nor did I realize *The Tree of Man* would remain unread—or that packet soups would continue to play havoc with my bile ducts. I had no idea that in years to come I would frequently be given Drambuie as a tonic in times of psychic trauma. There was no hint that the map of my high emotional ground would be redrawn to incorporate these features.

But one intuition accompanied my ferocious appetite. I knew I had to get myself a Joe Brown pack—I knew I wanted to be a climber. ■

Quentin Chester (see Contributors in *Wild* no 3) is a freelance writer who specializes in outdoor topics. He is originally from Adelaide and lived for some years in exile on the Hawkesbury River, New South Wales, dreaming of the Flinders Ranges. Quentin Chester recently returned to Adelaide. He is author of *The Kimberley—Horizons of Stone*, reviewed in *Wild* no 48.



TAMAN NEGARA





Three Sydney walkers brave a rain-forest wilderness to seek the summit of peninsular Malaysia's highest peak, by Brian Walker

The night sounds were stilled by the first faint light of dawn. From the steep slopes downriver came the whooping cries of a troop of gibbon, echoing in the sultry air.

I was sitting on the bank of the Tahan River in Taman Negara, one of the great National Parks of the world. This vast rain forest, covering 4343 square kilometres, is situated almost in the centre of the Malay Peninsula and comprises Malaysia's green heart. It was a far cry from the scrubby ridges and river valleys of the Kanangra-Boyd and Blue Mountains National Parks near Sydney where I do most of my walking.

In front of me, a jumping fish shattered the mirror-like surface of a deep, dark pool the colour of strong tea. Flotillas of leaves and flower petals tossed about in the expanding circle of ripples. The surface mist quickly dissipated as full daylight arrived with tropical swiftness, and with it went the fleeting coolness of early morning. The dripping humidity wrapped around me like warm, wet tissue-paper.

Together with two fellow walkers—Jeff Howard and Peter Barlow—I was attempting to reach the 2187 metre summit of Gunung (Mt) Tahan, West Malaysia's highest mountain. This was not a tourist trek with guides and a team of bearers to carry our gear. There were just the three of us with an inadequate map, a few brief track notes and everything we needed for three weeks in the jungle—food, clothing, camping gear, cameras—in packs on our own backs.

I'd never been terribly impressed by the snow-clad peaks and glaciers typical of the most popular overseas walking regions. This was something completely different. In the rain forest we were surrounded by a veritable wall of foliage; trees, shrubs, ferns, palms and vines so densely packed and intertwined as to be almost impenetrable. To me, this ancient jungle, teeming with life, was far more interesting than frozen mountain wastes, no matter how spectacular the latter might be.

We were three days' walk from the camping ground at the National Park headquarters, Kuala Tahan, and suffering badly from the effects of the tropical heat and suffocating humidity. We had allowed four days for the 60 kilometre outward journey, but after walking for two days we needed no persuasion to take a break at a beautiful spot called Kuala Teku, the junction of the Teku and Tahan Rivers.

On the previous day we had covered only 13 kilometres in eight hours, climbing 26 separate hills along a notorious ridge called Bukit Malang. At the last of these hills, Gunung Rajah, a 150 metre climb required all the energy and will-power we could muster. Although at 56 I'm still pretty strong in the legs, this was the toughest walk I'd ever attempted; Peter and Jeff, both half my age, suffered just as much. The incredible

We thought no self-respecting elephant would climb these tortuous ridges.

Our intention was to camp on a prominent, waterless peak called Gunung Tanga Lima Belas, about two and a half hours' walk above Wray's, but we stopped short of this goal when we found a small spring of water about half-way there. Unaware that we were in the rodent capital of Malaysia, we erected our tents on a narrow, level patch in the



The Padang plateau. Teku Gorge is in the middle distance. The mountain in the background is Gunung Ulu Kechau. The campsite can be seen as a small white dot in the scrub, left middle distance, close to the rim of the gorge. The summit track can be faintly seen through the haze. Previous page, crossing the upper reaches of the Tahan River on the way to Four Steps Waterfall. Brian Walker

humidity, combined with the steepness of the track and our heavy loads, made every step an ordeal.

We plodded along like weary old men, one foot after the other in ponderous slow motion. Although we each drank up to seven litres of water a day, dehydration was a real problem. As fast as we took in fluid, we sweated it straight out again. We were constantly thirsty. Even eating was difficult because we had no saliva. It took us about ten days to become reasonably acclimatized. Until then, walking even short distances was slow and exhausting.

At Kuala Teku we lightened our packs by unloading most of our food and leaving it in bags suspended from trees, out of the reach of animals. We took only five days' supplies for the trip to the summit and back. Refreshed by our break, we set out again, ascending through dense rain forest from 550 to 1100 metres in a steady slog.

Our first stop was Wray's Camp, a bare clearing on a knoll, named after the co-leader of the first botanical survey of the mountain in 1905. Our track notes suggested that we look out for elephant tracks in this area but we didn't see any.

middle of the track and later spent much of the night chasing marauding jungle rats away from our food. As usual, we just managed to cook a meal before the evening thunderstorm doused the fire.

These afternoon storms were a regular occurrence. The water which evaporated from the forest all day gradually formed huge banks of cumulus clouds over the highlands. Every afternoon a series of spectacular electrical storms rolled around the peaks, gradually spreading out over the surrounding ridges and valleys before dumping a virtual avalanche of water back on to the already saturated earth.

As soon as we heard the distant roll of thunder—usually about half past five—we knew that we had roughly an hour to make camp, get a fire going and cook a meal before the rain would come. Through sheer luck we missed only one meal because of rain although it was often touch-and-go due to the difficulty of lighting a fire with sodden rain-forest wood.

As we climbed higher above Wray's Camp we noticed a change in the vegetation from towering lowland rain-forest trees to smaller, stunted varieties. Here and there we saw conifers and, in exposed areas, gnarled, rough-barked teatrees, very similar to the Australian varieties. The climb was quite difficult with many very steep ups and downs, some of them almost vertical.

The National Parks Service had placed fixed ropes in some of the more difficult

Life in the Malaysian jungle

spots. It was necessary to make sure of every foot- and handhold because the wet, slippery conditions were extremely treacherous. From a flat-topped pinnacle named Bukit Reskit we had a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside.

To the west was the mighty Teku Gorge in which we could see several big waterfalls. We made plans for a future canyoning trip. Northward, we caught our first clear glimpse of the route ahead—a narrow, jungle-clad ridge studded with rocky pinnacles. Beyond this, high, white cliffs marked the edge of the upper slopes of Gunung Gedong, a cloud-enshrouded neighbour of Gunung Tahan.

We found that we had to climb up and over several of the rock pinnacles, which involved a lot of scrambling. But after this the track was fairly level until we reached a deep, gloomy cleft in the cliffs. Here the trees were straight and tall with a dense canopy which allowed little sunlight to reach the ground. The track was steep and wet. After climbing for about 20 minutes, we emerged on to a rocky headland covered with low, stunted heath.

Now the heat of the lowlands was gone. A cool wind, blowing in gusts, swirled the clouds around us, reducing visibility to about 20 metres. Suddenly it didn't feel at all tropical and we took a breather to make the most of the unexpected chill. In the surrounding scrub we discovered beautiful orchids and pitcher plants.

We were at a height of 1830 metres and our next campsite was about half an hour's walk away—and 300 metres lower—on a bare, open plateau known as the Padang. This we reached with rain threatening and dense, low cloud blotting out the view of Gunung Tahan. Several crumbling concrete slabs marked the site of a weather-station which used to be here many years ago.

We had trouble finding a place to pitch our tents well clear of the surrounding fern thickets which, like the lower slopes, were infested with jungle rats. In the usual race against the elements we got our tents up and a fire going, but we weren't optimistic about the possibility of fine weather for a dash to the summit the following day.

We needn't have worried. After a cold night—the only time on the entire trip we needed our sleeping-bags—the day dawned crisp and clear. We started early in the hope of reaching the summit before the clouds rolled in again. Our path across the Padang was dissected by many small creeks in deep, narrow gullies filled with rain forest. Between gullies it was level walking until we began to climb steeply to a dip in the ridge between Gunung Gedong and Gunung Tahan.

Here the dense, low rain forest was festooned with mosses, ferns and orchids, all covered with glistening



Top, greener than green—a spectacular caterpillar! **Middle**, the elephant beetle is quite a handful! **Bottom left**, vines like this bring you to a sudden halt! **Bottom right**, pitcher plants can be found among the highland heath. *Brian Walker*

drops of moisture. It was a fairy-tale land, eerily quiet and very beautiful. We soon re-emerged into the stunted heaths of the highlands and began the final 350 metre ascent. We reached the summit at half past eleven, in blazing sunlight but with a cold wind already pushing the first clouds up from the surrounding valleys.

Elated by our success, we looked around us at the magnificent panorama. There were no jagged peaks or sweeping glaciers, just long, ragged ridges covered with rain forest falling away in every direction. In the distance, where the ridges merged with the lowlands and river valleys, great pinnacles of limestone towered hundreds of metres above the forest canopy.

Only in one place was there any sign of human intrusion. About 40 or 50 kilometres to the north we could see the scars of extensive logging operations, right up to the park boundary. We gave thanks to the far-sighted British who originally established the park in 1938, and the successive Malaysian governments which had allowed it to remain intact ever since.

The cold wind ensured that we didn't stay for long. We were also afraid of becoming fog-bound by the swiftly gathering clouds, so after taking lots of photographs, we quickly retraced our steps to the Padang. By the time we reached our camp, cloud concealed the peaks once more and we realized how lucky we had been to have a few hours of clear weather.

With lighter packs and downhill travel, we completed the return trip to Kuala Teku in less than a day. Our food was still safe where we had left it. We repacked and rested before setting out the next morning for another of the park's major features, Four Steps Waterfall, at the head of the Tahan River.

This trip, through steaming lowland rain forest, took us into some of the most remote areas of the park. Here we did

cacophony began. As usual, before going to sleep, we lay in our tents with beating hearts, listening to the most amazing sounds as the creatures of the night began the racket that continued until dawn.

We didn't manage to find out which creatures made the various noises. Some were obviously frogs; some were insects; others were probably birds. The loud grunts and growls clearly came from



The Orang Asli, native to the forest, are intrigued by sweating white men in Speedos. *Brian Walker*

find frequent signs of elephant—huge footprints and enormous piles of dung. Occasionally we caught a glimpse of other large animals slinking off into the undergrowth, but they vanished before we could identify them.

There's no doubt that Taman Negara is one of the great wilderness areas in the world. Rare animals such as elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, leopards, tapirs and honey bears still roam here freely. It's a bird-watcher's paradise. We saw hundreds of different kinds of birds from huge hornbills to tiny, brilliantly coloured kingfishers—and many exotic species we couldn't identify.

In some places it was hard to tell which was the walking track and which were animal trails. The criss-cross network of paths and lack of clear landmarks tended to make navigation very tricky. For the first time we had heavy rain in the middle of the day. This brought out leeches in their hundreds of thousands. By the time we reached our campsite in the late afternoon, so much blood was flowing down our bare legs that we looked as if we had been machine-gunned.

To dodge the leeches, we erected our tents on a patch of sand beside the river. Fortunately, the rain stopped just long enough for us to cook a meal. Night comes very swiftly in the tropics. By half past seven it was dark and the evening

animals—quite large and probably hungry animals. We imagined an encircling horde of tigers, leopards and other slaving beasts. But, except for their cries, they fortunately never revealed themselves.

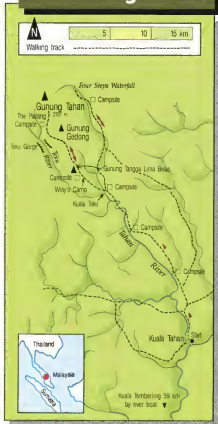
Apart from a few abandoned camps of the Orang Asli, the primitive nomadic people of the forest who reminded me very much of tribal Aborigines, there was little sign of human activity in this part of the park. We really felt that we were experiencing a primordial wilderness.

The track to the waterfall wound through a rocky gorge, crossing precipitous slopes on slippery ledges high above the river. As the gorge narrowed, we began to climb. Up and up we went interminably, 600 metres to the foot of the escarpment below Gunung Tahan, where the river dropped spectacularly down a towering cliff into the head of the magnificent valley.

At the foot of the falls we emerged from the jungle on to a tumbled pile of house-sized boulders. It was a place so wild and remote it made us feel as though we were the only people left on earth. For a while at least, we gave no thought to the humdrum of civilization. We lit a fire and made a billy of tea while we enjoyed the spectacle of it all. It was one of those special times when you know that it's great to be alive. ■

Brian Walker is a member of the Coast & Mountain Walkers bushwalking club (CMW) in Sydney. He has been a bushwalker for over 40 years. Brian is also an active conservationist and a foundation member of the Colong Committee.

Taman Negara





WILD CANOEING

HERBERT *RIVER REPORT*

by Liam Guilar

We were supposed to be in Papua New Guinea, on an expedition sponsored by *Australian Geographic*, not on the Herbert River in northern Queensland. But a combination of circumstances had led us here. We had repeatedly been told that to travel in the

I had felt conspicuous driving around a drought-stricken countryside in search of water while farmers watched their livelihood wither before their eyes. In the small timber towns, where the local sawmill relied on trees that would soon be protected by World Heritage Listing,

signs saying 'Save our forests, plant a Greenie' added a bitter humour to an atmosphere reeking with animosity. You could sense the despair of men who had built their lives around a doomed timber industry in small towns where there was nothing else to fall back on.

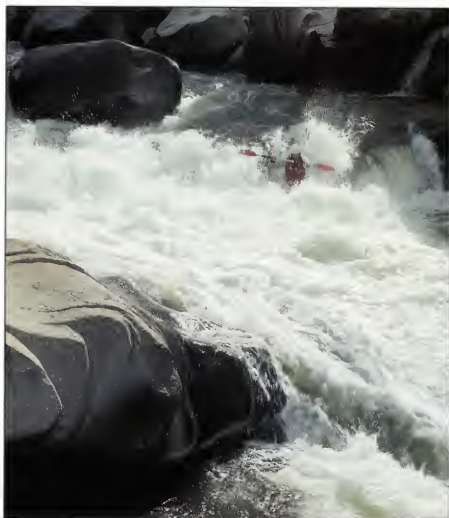
The area is still not free of controversy. The effect of the Tully-Millstream project on the Herbert River remains to be seen and there are rumours of yet another engineering scheme which will directly alter the Herbert.

This time there was water in the creeks and green grass in the fields. No longer did the cows look like rusted machinery nor the trees as if they had been stripped by an artillery bombardment in the First World War.

We hired a local tour guide to drive shuttle for us and met him and his crew at 6 am in Cardwell. On the long dirt road to Cashmere we listened to stories of the ringer's life. He told us about working on isolated properties; how he'd found caves the Aborigines had used to store weapons when they swapped their coastal weapons for those they needed in the interior and how to tell the difference between the nest of a scrub-turkey and that of a crocodile.

The man had a seemingly inexhaustible knowledge of the area. He reminded us that, with our plastic boats and expensive gear, we were merely successors to Burke and Wills; gentlemen adventurers, part-time travellers coming from a world of convenience to move through a landscape barely understood—and that he was heir to the men who went about their daily business in the very wilderness that shrivelled the gentlemen into glorious failure.

We put in at Glen Eagle Station, just below the Cashmere bridge, two days above the Herbert Falls. The river is like

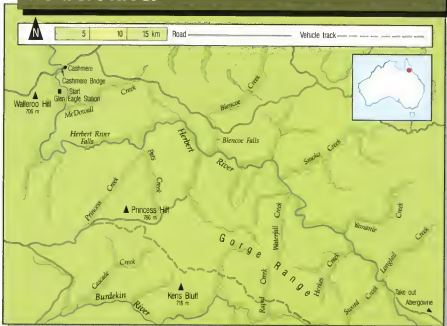


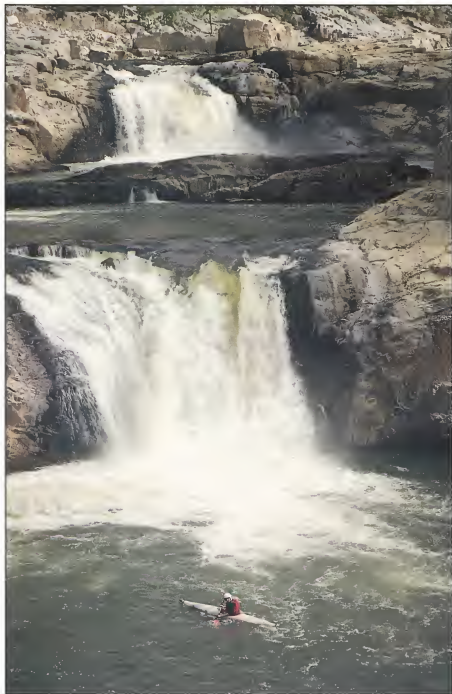
'Miss a roll and die.'—Liam Gullar rides the Sphincter Relaxer. **Right**, the majestic and demanding Herbert River. **Previous page**, Ian Johnston, dwarfed by the Herbert Falls. **Page 56**, the art of avoiding long and tedious portages. **Ian Johnston collection**

Central Highlands would be an act of certifiable insanity. We had wanted to film the New Guinea trip but the film crew we had approached wanted extra time to get their act together. So we decided to go for the Herbert, which is one of the best wilderness trips in Australia. Trevor asked four friends to bring their raft along to carry Michael, the camera man, down the river. Michael knew nothing about kayaking or rafting. We didn't learn until much later that he had never before been camping.

Twenty hours of driving. The last time I'd come this way, I'd driven the dawn shift through the drought-stricken landscape south of Bowen. Too tired for coherence, I'd wondered petulantly who'd dropped the bomb without telling me about it.

Herbert River





the Brisbane River in its old stage, broad and flat with little current. At lunch we saw crocodile tracks in the sand, and reassured ourselves that they had to be freshies this far above the falls. In the afternoon the inevitable upstream wind made it hard going for the raft and the team discussed carrying it overland to cut out the huge meander we were about to enter. Sanity prevailed.

The river soon narrows, and flows through numerous tree-choked channels. Limbo-dancing in a kayak is one thing, but for five people in a five metre rubber raft the trees were a brutal obstacle. Fortunately, our rafting team coped in the same way they always cope; with humour.

On the second day the river cleared the trees and began to run over a series of ledges and drops, all of which could be

run in raft or kayak. On one of these, Mark managed to shorten his Alpha by a good ten centimetres when he hit a hidden rock. Despite this it was hard to get serious about these drops until, at the lip of one rapid, Trevor turned, grinned, and said: 'Miss a roll and die.'

Our first portage began immediately after that rapid at an unrunnable double fall. Just downstream from this is a place called the Laundry Chute where the river narrows and plunges through a three metre gap to fall five or six metres. Trevor ran this. The pressure of the water at the bottom folded his boat in half and ripped a 40 centimetre gash in the hull.

Another portage led us to a long, beautiful grade-four rapid with a messy high cross to get to the other side of the river to begin the rapid. Soon after this we came to the Herbert Falls.

The commercial rafting teams abseil the main Herbert Falls, but we bush-walked instead to carry our gear round them. I hadn't had so much fun since I carried two substantial rucksacks up Mt Barney Gorge. Next morning the rest of the team carried and paddled the raft upstream a kilometre to take pictures of the falls.

Below the falls, the Herbert is one long stretch of waterfalls and rapids. Some of the falls are obligatory portages and require ropes. With four experienced outdoor educators in the team, each portage became a seminar in rope trickery.

Of course, some of the falls can be kayaked by the determined and the desperate. I'm not sure into which category Trevor fits. He seems a sensible man until he sees water pouring over great heights and then a certain calculating lunacy sets in. I think he adds one more waterfall to his collection on each trip.

When I started paddling in 1971 you stayed out of holes and took photos of waterfalls. It is indicative of the way kayaking has progressed over the past 20 years that soon all the falls between Cashmere and Abergowrie will be run except for the main Herbert Falls themselves. One day a party will arrive there and a member of the team will say: 'Hold the rope! And make sure you get a good photo.'

Some of the rock-gardens are so long that they take over half an hour to negotiate. They certainly tested our patience as we eddy-hopped our way through, switching the lead. In rapids like these, the grading system becomes redundant. Some of the big rapids, the evocatively named Sphinxer Relaxer or Flipped and Dipped, for example, are hard enough to keep even the most jaded paddler alert.

You can never be too experienced. We learnt a lot paddling the river; the extra

Paddling the Herbert yourself

We put in at Glen Eagle station, downstream from the Cashmere bridge. The owner wasn't too keen on that idea until he discovered that we were from Brisbane and then everything was fine. There is a gauge downstream from here on the right bank. It was reading 3 metres. We presumed that meant 1.3 metres. This was a little bony and we could have used another half metre of water in some of the lower rock-gardens. From previous trips Trevor thinks 1.7 metres is a good level.

It took us seven days to reach Abergowrie. A small kayak team would probably do this easily in five days if one of them knew the river. There are numerous good campsites and some stunning scenery. The most distinctive feature of the river is the sustained quality of the rapids. There are very few still pools until you pass Blencoe. Take good ropes for the portages. And lots of film. ■



time needed for filming, the fact that our 'indestructible' plastic kayaks were not only breakable but also irreparable. We broke three. We patched them with tape, smeared on heated plastic, warmed the hulls by the fire and tried to 'warm' the holes together with a heated spoon. When all this failed, we tried to suture the hull of Trevor's boat with pieces of wire from his Billy handle. In the end the gash looked like some awful suppurating sore and Trevor had to borrow Jackie's boat for the waterfalls.

We had not anticipated the length of time filming a documentary would take, and with other schedules to meet we knew that the last day on the river, where the Herbert widens and slows on its way to the estuary, would be long. In the end we had almost 50 kilometres to make on that day; a long way in a kayak but a hideous distance for a rubber raft in the long, still pools. Tying kayaks behind we plodded on and sang away the miles. This was our song: It's called 'There's a Hole in My Kayak', and to the tune of Streets of Laredo.

As I walked out in the streets of Ingham, As I walked out in Ingham one day, I saw three sad paddlers whose kayaks were shattered
Strewn all around them the bright fragments lay.

Trev said the Herbert's a dream of a river. The gorges are splendid, magnificent views,

The rock-gardens endless, the portages savage.
With a description like that, how could we refuse?

So we paddled the Herbert from Cashmere to Blencoe.
We kayaked the rapids and portaged the falls
But although our kayaks were made out of plastic
Despite all our skill they didn't cope well at all.

Trev broke his boat going over a waterfall. Mark shortened his Alpha on a rock in a drop.
While Jackie broke the hull of her Dancer
When a rock in a stopper brought her to a stop.

So we plastered on tape and we smeared on hot plastic.
We heated the hulls by a raging wood fire.
When the leaks didn't stop and things were looking drastic
We sutured the hulls with bits of old wire.

In the days of my youth kayaks weren't made of plastic;
Built out of glass fibre they were intended to last.
You could scratch them or smash them but then you could patch them,
Sadly repairs are a thing of the past.

So as I walked out in the streets of Ingham, As I walked out in Ingham one day,

I saw three sad paddlers head south for Brisbane
And as for their kayaks they threw them away.

(Actually we paddled from Glen Eagle Station to Abergowrie, but that wouldn't scan.)

We probably would have enjoyed the beauty of the last two moonlit hours of paddling had it not been for the ever present fear of crocodiles. We'd been told there had been sightings of a six metre croc in the gorge below the falls. We didn't see it. We didn't want to see it. But as it grew dark and harder to pick a line down the shallowing river, the raft repeatedly ran aground. No one seemed enthusiastic about leaping out and pushing it clear.

It was dark as we drove away, and 40 kilometres an hour seemed excessively fast. We arrived in Ingham to see a sign: 'Chinese food. All you can eat for eight dollars.' I think they'll remove the sign the next time they see us coming.

With its majestic waterfalls, its beautiful gorges, its hard rapids and harder portages, the Herbert is a dream of a river. In 20 years of kayaking I've paddled harder rapids but I don't think I've ever paddled such a beautiful, demanding river. ■

Liam Gular started kayaking in 1971. After paddling white water in Britain, the European Alps and North America, he came to Australia five years ago. His ambition is/was to have an article published in Wild.

Camera...action!

The river poured over the waterfall. Confused by its sudden confinement in the pool below water boiled and frothed before it plunged over a series of drops and disappeared round the corner. Trevor and I waited for Michael to set up the camera so he could film us running the rapid. As we waited it became increasingly difficult to ignore all the unpleasant possibilities.

I watched Trevor disappear round the bend and then fumbled my way into my kayak. There was no one to hold my boat as I got in, no one to help me if I got it wrong so high up the rapid. But it wasn't difficult. It was probably only a grade four. It just began with a simple move that I'd failed to pull off numerous times in far more friendly surroundings. Maybe it was a four plus?

Edging close to a small fall I drew the kayak across to the middle, where the water from the main fall seethed and boiled. A five minus? What difference did it make? The boat wallowed unpleasantly as the frothing water snatched at the stern and tried to tip me over. Rolling in this would not be impossible, but if it'd be a nightmare. Hanging upside down in the boat as it went over the drops or bailing out and swimming them—both were unthinkable alternatives. All I had to do was cross the mess and reach the relative calm of the other side of the river to give me the best line on the rapid.

Almost to my surprise I made it to the relative calm of the far bank. In the shelter of a rock wall I spun the boat and made for the first drop while holding a line that I hoped would take me over the next one. The boat plunged, bobbed up as I shook water from my face, steadied, plunged on, and came skidding to a jubilant halt in the middle pool.

Michael was setting up his camera to film the second half of the rapid. Elated by my run on the top half, I decided to continue and let someone else be a Hollywood boater. The stopper at the bottom of the next drop chewed the tail of my boat and I had to fight to escape its clutches and get into the eddy. I never really got out of it. I found myself pushed away from the main current, wedged sideways above a two metre drop, and with a little assistance managed to rattle over it and land upside down in the pool below.

So much for precision paddling. ■

Spun-out by the Laundry Chute, moments later the boat was irreparable. Ian Johnston





THE LIVING CENTRE

Life and beauty in the Australian
outback, by *Ugo Grassano*



Ugo Grassano holds a doctorate in botany and is a keen bushwalker and photographer. He has travelled extensively in Australia since moving here from Italy in 1980. A high-school teacher, freelance writer and photographer, Ugo Grassano's main area of interest is early human settlements in arid regions.

Young heron at Coopers Creek, South Australia. **Left**, dune sunrise. All photos were taken in SA.



Salt flowers at Lake Eyre.
Right, 'poetry in motion'.



SKIING FROM KIANDRA TO KOSCIUSKO

The classic ski tour, by Colin Sutherland

Kiandra (1390 metres), on the Snowy Mountain's Highway between Adamaby and Talbingo in New South Wales, is a former gold-mining town and Australia's first ski resort. The winter crossing from here to the Snowy River region and on to the peak of Mt Kosciusko (2228 metres) is generally considered our finest long ski journey. This journey has been done in a single day, but often takes more than a week. The long distance, the potential navigational difficulties and the unpredictability of mountain weather ensure that many attempts at the crossing fail. I once met a fellow on Mt Bogong, Victoria, who told me that his three attempts at the tour from Kiandra to Kosciusko had been thwarted by weather. Of course, for many of us these difficulties only add to the attraction of the 'KK Crossing', and the satisfaction of finally planting a ski stock at 2228 metres on the peak of Mt Kosciusko is worth all the sweat and toil.

The route I shall describe begins at Kiandra and passes through the vast jagged wilderness area to the south before entering the Munyang River corridor, climbing up on to the Main Range and culminating in the ascent of Mt Kosciusko. Our journey ends at Perisher Valley, entails a climb of about 2000 metres over a distance of 116 kilometres and is certainly the longest, highest and most remote route in our mountains. It crosses four major watercourses (Happy Jacks Creek, Tibeaud Creek, the Valentine River and the Snowy River) as well as countless minor creeks and bogs which wet the boots. There are plenty of peaks to bag along the route.

History

The first winter crossing was made in 1927. The party was led by Bertie Schlink and finished at the Kosciusko Hotel near Smiggins Holes rather than at the peak. Schlink and his party had failed to complete a south to north crossing in the previous year when they were weathered in at Tin Hut for three days. Jean Trimble was the first woman to complete the winter traverse with two male companions in August 1936, finishing at The Chalet, Charlottes Pass.

Paddy Pallin first skied the route in 1957, at the age of 56, in a northward direction. He and his two companions journeyed from Guthega Power Station to Kiandra in five days. In July–August 1977 Paddy, then aged 76, took part in a commemorative trip to mark the 50th anniversary of Schlink's crossing. His party of nine included Ted Winter (in his sprightly 60s) and Ted's daughter Bronwyn, who was evacuated after suffering severe scalding at Four Mile Hut. The journey took five days from Kiandra to Guthega resort.



A convenient snow-bridge, such as this one on the Snowy River, can avoid much pain! Glenn van der Knijff

When to visit

Snow conditions vary tremendously from year to year and there are no safe bets regarding the best time to undertake this tour. Schlink's 1929 traverse was in late July–early August. September and October are good months although a thaw can make some sections of the route very wet. Spare dry footwear to put on at night is a must rather than a luxury in these conditions. The advantages of spring are that the weather is warmer and a little more settled, and that there are more daylight hours. It may also be a good idea to plan your trip around a full moon to assist any unforeseen late arrivals.

Choosing a route

This depends on many factors including time available, speed of the party, and snow conditions. There are two points to remember. First, to use ridges rather than gullies when snow cover allows you to take advantage of thinner scrub and unbroken visibility; and, secondly, that the prevailing wind is generally nor'-westerly or westerly. This means that the eastern side of a ridge will usually have a better snow cover, although at lower altitudes that side will also tend to have thicker scrub.

In October 1991 I was in a party of six of varying levels of fitness and experience who travelled the described route in just over six days. No one in the party had previously skied the central part of the route between Broken Dam Hut and Tin Hut. There had been very good spring falls that season, providing good cover above 1600–1700 metres. However, several very warm days (10–20°C) before our departure from Kiandra resulted in lots of walking and some dreadful bog- and creek crossings in the Happy Jacks Plain area and around Macgregors and Tibeaud Creeks.

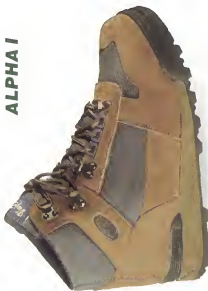
The route takes in a number of huts for several reasons. First, many have well-constructed toilets and thus benefit both the environment and the health of park users. Secondly, they contain log-books which, if used, can be of great help in locating stray skiers. Thirdly, huts provide convenient landmarks at strategic locations along the route. But many skiers prefer to give huts a wide berth for exactly these reasons! They do not always provide a reliable and comfortable place to spend the night and are not nearly as warm as a good tent.

Maps

Unfortunately, this trip requires a minimum of five topographic maps. From north to south I recommend *Mt Selwyn* 1:25 000, NSW Ski

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Association; Denison 1:25 000, CMA; Eucumbene, Khancoban and Kosciuszko 1:50 000, CMA. In addition, a personal favourite partially covering the Khancoban sheet is Tim Lambie's sketch map *Mt Jagungal and the Brassy Mountains* 1:31 680.

Access

The most suitable starting points are either the cross-country skiers' car-park at the Mt Selwyn resort or the small car-park at the foot of Dunns Hill in Kiandra. This is on the eastern side of the Snowy Mountains Highway near a small ruin approximately 400 metres south of the Kiandra Department of Main Roads depot. A horrendous car shuffle is all but unavoidable: one solution is to leave vehicles at both Bullocks Flat ski-tube terminal and at Kiandra, a round trip of 300 kilometres! The alternative is to go by bus or to hitch-hike at one end.

The central portion of the journey is through the remote jagungal wilderness area, and there are few exit points north of Munyang. It is thus essential that parties are large enough to mount self-rescue if necessary, and experienced in solving back-country problems and in navigation. In my view this is far more important than being good skiers. North of Happy Jacks Plain, it is advisable to retrace your steps if difficulties arise.

In the Spencers Peak-Cesjacks area, it is possible to head east to Eucumbene. A route

to the Tolbar Road by way of Kellys and Adams Huts (both private and possibly locked) would eventually bring you out at Eucumbene Cove. Much of this route may be above the snow-line after heavy falls. Once beyond this area it is probably wisest to continue to Guthega Power Station by the Munyang Road, thus omitting the Main Range leg. A new winter shelter for National Parks & Wildlife Service rangers has been built

Arsenic Ridge, with Brooks Hut nestling on the eastern side. Two kilometres due south of Brooks Hut is a foot-bridge over Happy Jacks Creek, wrongly depicted on *Eucumbene* as being on a tributary. Follow Happy Jacks Road for one and a half kilometres to McKeanies Creek, or a further kilometre to Macgregors Creek. Either watercourse provides a route to the higher ground traversed by the Grey Mare fire track. This fire track is difficult to follow



Paper warfare? Peter Lockhart surveys the way ahead; near Four-mile Saddle, Mt Selwyn area. Colin Sutherland

at Schlink Hilton, and this may have a radio for emergencies. However, this shelter is not permanently occupied.

The trip

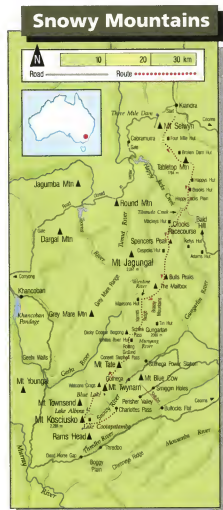
Kiandra to Happy Jacks Plain. From Kiandra climb either Dunns Hill or Township Hill (which often has better snow) on to a broad, undulating spur. Join up with the Mt Selwyn ski track (marked by poles) under the power lines and follow it to where the Tabletop Mountain fire track diverges to the south. There is a log-book here. Ski down to Four Mile Saddle and either turn off to Four Mile Hut 500 metres to the east, or continue on the fire track, initially along a fence line. After climbing to Milkman's Flat, the way becomes obscure. A south-south-east heading which avoids Nine Mile Diggings will bring you across a broad spur from which it is a simple matter to continue to Tabletop Mountain. Alternatively, Broken Dam Hut can be reached by doubling back from this spur down a broad watercourse.

After skirting to the north of Tabletop, and bagging the peak if desired, it is imperative to come right round the mountain before descending to a saddle at the south-eastern end. It is then best to follow the approximate route of the fire track to a junction—no doubt obscured by snow—on a ridge running roughly east-west. A descent to Happs Hut is possible here, or traverse further west on to

when covered in snow and should not be relied upon as a guide. The area can be very boggy in spring and wet boots are often unavoidable. To reach Mackeys (formerly Tibeaudos) Hut you have to cross Tibeaudos Creek, which is difficult after a thaw.

A high-level alternative to the above route, which might promise better snow, is to follow the Tabletop Mountain fire track and Tolbar Road further east. It is also possible to travel from Brooks to Mackeys more to the west, by way of Boo Bee Hut, but this involves finding a crossing of Happy Jacks Creek.

Spencers Peak and Jagungal to Schlink Pass. From Mackeys Hut, a straightforward ascent to Spencers Peak is possible along the western bank of Diggers Creek. Spencers can be bagged for good views back to Tabletop, and of Jagungal to the west. Otherwise skirt round the western flank to a broad, wind-swept saddle which lies between tributaries of the Doubtful and Gungahlin Rivers. Skiing south-south-west along or just below the crest of the range, which here marks the National Park boundary, Cesjacks Hut is reached after three and a half kilometres. Just outside the park are private huts and there are many fences in this area because of its relative accessibility from Lake Eucumbene. Viewed from the south, Mt Jagungal appears as a crouching lion, but from Cesjacks it is very much a backside view. From here, ski south along the crest of the range. The east-facing slopes above the Bulls Peaks River retain good snow cover well into spring and provide excellent, steep downhill runs. After ascending



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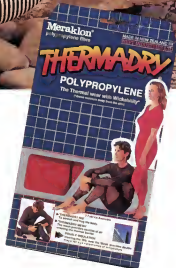
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TRACK NOTES

Smiths Perisher, a side trip to Mt Jagungal by way of McAlister Saddle is recommended.

The route continues south from Smiths Perisher, keeping to the west of the Bulls Peaks and traversing round the east flank of the Mailbox. It is essential to get right round the Mailbox and the Cup and Saucer before descending to cross the Valentine River, thus reaching Mawsons Hut. (Our party strayed to the east here, and ended up in Dead Horse Creek with much waiting and gnashing of teeth.) When snow conditions are favourable, an alternative is to stay high and traverse the western side of the Brassys to Tin Hut. From there, it is quite straightforward to cross Gungahart Pass to the south-west and then drop down to Schlink Hill or Schlink Pass. If coming from Mawsons Hut, climb up to the Kerries ridge and follow it south. Keep on the west bank of the creek at the southern end and follow it as it turns due west to Schlink Hill. The Munyang Road then takes you to nearby Schlink Pass which is a watershed between the Geehi and Snowy River systems.

The Rolling Ground and the Main Range. This part of the journey is well travelled and has been covered in previous Track Notes (see Wild no 41) so I will only outline the routes available. From Schlink Pass it is first necessary to climb and cross the Rolling Ground to reach Conssett Stephen Pass, which provides the only high-level access to the Main Range from the Munyang-Schlink Pass area. The Rolling Ground is notorious for bad visibility and inevitably requires some adept compass work. However, if you have made it this far, navigation is probably a skill that someone in the party has mastered! From Conssett Stephen Pass ascend steeply to the Main Range by climbing Mt Tate. In so doing you will cross the 2000 metre line for the first time on the route proper (Jagungal excluded).

Once on the Main Range, spectacular high campsites abound, and an exhilarating high-level traverse along the crest of the range is possible in good weather. In its extreme form, this route crosses over or near the peaks of Mts Tate, Anderson, Anton, Twynam, Carruthers and Lee, then through Müellers Pass to Mt Kosciusko. A quicker route, suitable for poor weather or patchy snow, runs from the Pounds Creek area below Mt Anton across Crummer Spur, then south to the Snowy River. Cross on a convenient snow bridge and ascend to the summit road. If you are returning by this route, packs can be hidden here. It is relatively easy to 'dash' to Mt Kosciusko by the summit road, climb the peak, return to the packs and reach Charlottes Pass in half a day. From there, follow the well-marked tracks back to Perisher and either return to the Bullocks Flat car-park by the Ski-tube, or arrange a lift to Jindabyne. Alternatively, from Mt Kosciusko ski south to the Thredbo chair-lifts and down to the village.

Worth reading

Kiandra to Kosciusko by Klaus Hueneker (Tabletop Press, Canberra, 1987).

Never Truly Lost—The Recollections of Paddy Pallin by Paddy Pallin (New South Wales University Press, 1987). ■

Colin Sutherland is a biologist who currently teaches genetics in Darwin. Colin has spent the last four years writing a doctoral thesis when not ski-touring in the NSW high country or bushwalking in NSW, Qld and the NT.

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FOUR-SEASON TENTS

What goes up must come down; by Glenn Tempest

I had slept for about an hour when I was awakened by soft snow falling on my face. The tent, an intricate tangle of sodden guy ropes, flaps and ridges, offered very poor covering, as the snow melted and lay in pools of water in the folds of canvas, and from time to time these would empty themselves playfully down our necks...

Eric Shipton, *Nanda Devi*, 1934

These days a four-season tent, when properly pitched in a protected location, can be expected to provide both shelter and comfort during most winter and snow-camping situations. However, all tents when pitched in exposed sites and in extreme weather conditions run a high risk of collapse either by strong winds or the sheer weight of snow. For the purpose of this survey, a four-season tent is regarded as one which has the following features: at least one vestibule, a fly that comes close to or actually touches the ground, strong alloy-pole construction, suitable stitching, and fabrics and materials able to resist significant stress. All tents surveyed are designed to accommodate either two or three persons.

Although each tent is regarded as appropriate for four-season use by the manufacturer, quality and price vary greatly. As a rough rule, cheaper tents are often constructed from lower quality materials, and while suitable below the tree-line in winter, are not intended to be used for extended or high-mountain ski trips, nor will they last as long as their better build, more expensive counterparts. The old adage 'you get what you pay for' usually applies.

Explanations to each category are further expanded in the 'Lightweight Tent Survey' in *Wild* no 39. Mention should also be made of two specialist winter tents produced by Wilderness Equipment which are not covered in this survey. The Ice Prism is a unique polar pyramid and the Mountain Dome is a two-person, ultra-light Gore-Tex alpine tent.

The intended capacity indicates the number of people that the manufacturer claims can be comfortably accommodated within the tent. Obviously this depends a great deal upon the relationship you have with the other occupant(s). The term 2/3 indicates that two is company and three is almost a crowd. In such tents it will be roomier if the middle occupant sleeps head-to-toe. This is particularly harmonious when the tent has two entrances.

The weight includes poles but does not include pegs, seam-sealers, or repair kits. Having weighed many of these tents, it soon became obvious that there were some major discrepancies from manufacturers' stated weights. In a few cases the advertised weight of a tent, including pegs, turned out to be in fact far heavier even without the pegs. It didn't end there. The same model could also vary greatly in weight from one tent to another. This was particularly evident with some Asian-built tents, in which fabrics, zips and materials



Gear freaks take note: it's a Sierra Designs Expedition Stretch Dome (hot and cold running water is optional). For the rest of us, it's on the Staircase Spur, Mt Bogong, Victoria. Glenn Tempest

seemed to change regularly. It would be wise to check and weigh the tent you are about to purchase.

The shape of a tent will help to determine its ability to resist wind and shed snow. Most snow-tents in this survey are either tunnel- or dome-shaped and in some cases are a hybrid of the two. Fly sheets all come close to or actually touch the ground so that wind and driving rain cannot penetrate through to the inner. Some models, such as the Expedition versions of the Macpac Olympus and Minaret, have snow-valances which can be weighted down with rocks or snow. Other tents, such as those from Fairlydown and Wilderness Equipment, provide snow-valances as optional extras.

The internal measurements are the maximum in each dimension. These measurements do not, however, show angles or curves and are therefore not indicative of the total volume of the tent.

The internal floor area is measured in square metres and does not include the vestibule(s). Great care must be taken when choosing one tent over another simply because it has a larger floor area. Some tents, which appear spacious may have strange, intersecting angles that don't allow full use of the indicated area. This is particularly true of some dome designs. On the other hand, these odd spots can sometimes be put to good use as personal storage areas.

The entrance(s) to a snow-tent should be just big enough to crawl into comfortably

without letting in too much rain or snow. The number of entrances is based on how many separate doors lead into the inner tent itself. This is because some tents can technically be said to have two entrances into the same vestibule, as is the case for the Wilderness Equipment First Arrow. Two entrances will provide much better ventilation and more convenient access.

One of the more important features of any snow-tent is the vestibule. This is the continuation of the fly beyond the inner tent entrance, which then forms a separate alcove. Vestibules do not have a floor and are used to store equipment or prepare meals. Digging out the snow to form a deep pit inside the vestibule can significantly increase the working area of your tent (see *Wild* no 45, page 87).

Poles form the skeleton of the tent and as such are the key to its strength. Most higher quality snow-tents now use 8.5 to 11 millimetre diameter aluminium-alloy from Easton in the United States. Some tent manufacturers are using similar Asian-made alloy products which tend to be slightly cheaper. Alloy poles have a better strength-to-weight ratio than old-fashioned fibreglass and are more easily repaired in the field. Only the Caribee Tempest (!) and Caribee Caddis have cheaper optional fibreglass poles, while the Sierra Designs Expedition Stretch Dome utilizes two high-strength carbon-fibre poles in its large vestibule design. All the poles surveyed are shock-corded for ease of assembly.

The perfect tent doesn't have any seams but as yet there isn't a perfect tent. However, many tents are factory tape-sealed. Those that don't tape-seal will usually supply a tube of seam-

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sealant with which to do the job. And why, you ask, do some of the world's best known tents still avoid factory tape-sealing? The answer is not simple. Some manufacturers claim that they put the money saved by not tape-sealing a tent back into making a better quality product. Other manufacturers are not convinced that tape-sealing works all that well. It is true, however, that a tent that has been properly seam-sealed by hand should be

just as waterproof as one that has been factory tape-sealed. It is also true that factory sealing will, after heavy use, eventually peel off.

Most tent manufacturers supply only wire or simple angle pegs which are totally unsuitable for use in the snow. A few companies such as Walrus and Wilderness Equipment are rare exceptions. It is generally left up to the purchasers to buy the appropriate snow-pegs or even to make their own

(see *Wild* no 41, page 79). While each tent can be pitched with a bare minimum of pegs, it is advisable to carry enough to pitch the tent in the most extreme conditions. Skiers generally use their skis to anchor the tent, especially during the night or in bad weather. When skiing out from the tent during the day, try anchoring it down with the snow-shovel. Pull the shovel deep and tie it off with one of the guy lines.

Wild Gear Survey Four-season tents

	Intended capacity, persons	Measured weight, kilograms	Shape	Maximum internal length x width x height, centimetres	Internal floor area, square metres	Entrances	Vestibules	Alloy poles, number	Seamless or seam-sealed floor	Pegs, minimum/maximum	Vents	Comments	Approx. price, \$
Caribee Korea													
Tempest	2	3.6	Dome	205 x 180 x 120	3.3	2	2	3	Yes/No	4/12	2	Aluminum coated fly with snow-valances	299
Caddis	3	3.0	Tunnel	240 x 180 x 110	3.7	2	2	3	Yes/Yes	4/12	2		430
Eureka Korea													
Timberline	2	2.4	Hybrid	235 x 142 x 108	3.3	1	1	5	Yes/Yes	2/9	2	Hybrid 'K' shape, plus two short fly rods	389
Eureka Caddis	3	3.2	Tunnel	240 x 180 x 120	3.7	2	2	3	Yes/Yes	4/18	2	Two other versions of this tent available	529
Expedition Caddis	3	3.3	Tunnel	240 x 180 x 120	3.7	2	2	3	Yes/Yes	4/10	2	Broken pole sleeves, integral pitching	585
Expedition Traverse	2	3.5	Hybrid	205 x 130 x 105	2.7	2	2	4	Yes/Yes	4/14	2	Continuous mesh pole sleeves	639
Fairdown New Zealand													
Assault	2	2.7	Dome	220 x 120 x 113	2.8	2	2	2	Yes/Yes	2/10	2	Integral or fly first pitching	650
Plateau	2/3	3.6	Hybrid	216 x 148 x 113	3.0	2	2	4	Yes/Yes	4/14	2	Integral or fly first pitching	890
Hellmark New Zealand													
Snow Cave	2/3	3.4	Tunnel	220 x 180 x 110	2.2	2	2	4	Yes/No	4/10	None	Integral pitch plus edge pole	619
JenSport Vietnam													
Mountain Dome II	2	3.1	Dome	225 x 150 x 120	3.4	2	2	3	Yes/No	2/10	2	Polyester fly	495
Normal II	2	3.7	Dome	228 x 150 x 110	3.6	2	2	4	Yes/No	2/10	2	Polyester fly	460
Sheep Dome	2	3.8	Dome	210 x 150 x 130	4.5	2	2	4	Yes/No	2/16	2	Polyester fly	575
Sheep Dome Plus	2	4.2	Dome	210 x 150 x 130	4.5	2	2+	5	Yes/No	2/16	2	Polyester fly, extendable front vestibule	640
Magnep New Zealand													
Minaret	2	2.6	Tunnel	225 x 120 x 95	2.2	1	1	2	Yes/No	4/12	2	Inner fly or integral first pitching	529
Minaret Expedition	2	2.8	Tunnel	225 x 120 x 95	2.2	1	1	2	Yes/No	4/12	2	As for Minaret plus reinforcing and snow-valances	589
Olympus	2/3	3.5	Tunnel	230 x 145 x 113	2.7	2	2	3	Yes/No	4/16	2	Inner fly or integral first pitching	715
Olympus Expedition	2/3	3.7	Tunnel	230 x 145 x 113	2.7	2	2	3	Yes/No	4/16	2	As for Olympus plus reinforcing and snow-valances	799
Moss USA													
Olympic	2/3	3.6	Dome	297 x 180 x 122	4.4	2	1	4	No/No	2/12	None	Large vestibule area	949
Little Dipper	3	4.9	Dome	229 x 229 x 102	5.0	2	1	5	No/No	2/11	None	Large vestibule area	1200
Selwa Korea													
Serra Leone	2	3.1	Dome	215 x 150 x 116	3.2	2	2	3	Yes/Yes	2/14	2	Polyester fly, optional fitted groundsheet	479
Serra Magnum	3	3.6	Dome	245 x 180 x 118	4.4	2	2	3	Yes/Yes	2/14	2	Polyester fly	579
Serra Designs Korea													
Super Flash	2	2.2	Tunnel	243 x 147 x 115	3.1	1	1	3	No/No	4/12	None	Pre-angled poles	499
Trois I	2	3.2	Hybrid	231 x 148 x 104	3.4	2	1	4	No/No	2/14	None	Inner clips to poles	679
Expedition Stretch Dome	3	3.8	Dome	226 x 200 x 117	4.3	1	1	6	No/No	2/19	2	Two carbon-fibre vestibule poles; expedition fly	829
Vango Korea													
Humane Alpha	2	2.8	Tunnel	216 x 135 x 100	2.5	1	1	2	Yes/Yes	3/12	None	Integral pitching	690
Odysey 300	2	4.0	Hybrid	290 x 150 x 105	3.3	2	1	5	Yes/Yes	3/9	None		715
Humane Beta	2/3	3.0	Tunnel	215 x 155 x 111	2.9	1	1	2	Yes/Yes	3/12	None	Integral pitching	745
Odysey 400	3	4.7	Dome	210 x 250 x 130	4.6	2	1	5	Yes/Yes	3/9	None		875
Weinor China													
Skyline	2	3.0	Hybrid	257 x 200 x 114	3.7	2	1	6	Yes/No	2/8	2	Most poles do not require removal or insertion	499
Wild Country Korea													
Quasar	2	3.9	Hybrid	229 x 137 x 95	3.1	2	2	4	Yes/Yes	4/10	2	Continuous mesh pole sleeves	649
Hyperspace	3	4.6	Hybrid	268 x 190 x 120	3.8	2	2	5	Yes/Yes	4/12	2	Pole support on front vestibule	799
Super Nova	3	4.4	Dome	266 x 244 x 124	4.4	2	2	5	Yes/Yes	2/14	2	Pull-out rear vestibule	799
Wilderness Equipment Australia													
Second Arrow	2	2.1	Tunnel	200 x 130 x 95	2.2	1	1	2	Yes/Yes	3/7	None	Heavy-duty floor available	599
First Arrow	2/3	2.9	Tunnel	220 x 150 x 115	2.8	2	1	3	Yes/Yes	3/7	None	Heavy-duty floor available	769

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Snow-tents tend to build up heavy condensation and vents can help to stop the worst of it. Many tents have vents built into the vestibule, which is of great benefit when cooking. While most tents have vents built in, others, such as Wilderness Equipment's First and Second Arrows, can be zipped slightly open at the top of each entrance under a small awning. This alternative is just as efficient.

The price is approximate and can change without notice.

Tips, use, maintenance and care

Integral pitching indicates that the fly and the inner are directly attached and can be put up in one single stage if the user chooses. This has distinct advantages when fighting driving rain and high winds. The other side of the coin, however, is that when the tent is folded up and placed into a single stuff bag after a wet night, the inner tent will invariably become wet. For that reason many skiers separate the tent into waterproof stuff bags, one each for the inner, fly and poles. Snow-pegs can be placed into a tougher cordura-style stuff bag to avoid damaging other items. Some tents, such as those from Sierra Designs and Vango, have an internal guying system which substantially increases stability in high winds.

There is a wide range of accessories that can make snow-camping even more comfortable. Some tents can be fitted with a portable mesh attic, which is a great way to store extra gear or dry out any damp clothing. JanSport includes such an attic with its Sherpa Dome Plus. Also available is a handy gadget that will crimp anywhere on to a fly sheet, which can then be used as an extra guy line attachment in severe weather. To increase insulation from the snow and help to keep the floor dry, try using lightweight three millimetre foam which can be purchased off the roll by the metre. For other handy snow-camping tips refer to 'Camping in the Snow', *Wild* no 39, page 27.

All tents require careful drying out after use in wet weather. Regularly check the stitching and materials for any sign of wear or tear. A simple stick-on patching kit or similar nylon tape should always be carried in the repair kit. Don't be afraid to wash the tent. Most dirt will simply brush off when dry while warm water and a mild soap will remove any grubby stains. And remember: don't lay a complete tent-pole out on the snow when pitching your tent. The slightest slope will see it snake off without a sound, never to be seen again.

A tent is only as good as the location in which it is pitched. Always choose a well-sheltered site. If this is not possible, dig deeply into a snow-bank or build a high snow-wall around the tent to help deflect the wind. Don't forget that your snow-shovel is your tent's best friend on any snow-camping trip.

Having cleared the tent they dropped off into a deep sleep, only to be wakened again at four in the morning as the roof of the tent, forced down by the snow, touched their faces—rather like one of those nightmare stories of Edgar Allan Poe. Chris Bonington, *Everest South West Face*, 1972 ■

Glenn Tempest (see Contributors in *Wild* no 4) has been a Special Adviser to *Wild* since our second issue. A renowned raconteur, climber, mountain photographer and cross-country skier, Glenn is experienced in pitching tents.



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WATERPROOFING AGENTS

Don't be a wet one—a *Wild* survey

During most land-based outdoor activities we have one aim in common: we'd like to stay dry. Staying dry means staying comfortable, so your enjoyment of outdoor activities will be maximized by ensuring that your clothing and equipment are as waterproof as possible. The term 'waterproof' is actually a misnomer as nearly all 'waterproof' barriers will let water through eventually. The terms 'water-repellent' or 'water-resistant' are more appropriate; these accommodate the inevitable annoying damp spots that form beneath supposedly impermeable layers when you are out in heavy rain, passing under a waterfall, walking through wet grass, or if you fall in a river.

Genuinely waterproof barriers, such as plastic membranes, are not really an option for clothing and equipment as they are typically not durable enough to stand up to the rigours of outdoor activities. Also, clothing constructed from them will be insufferably sweaty; you will get wet anyway—from the inside. Sometimes staying dry can be a more important issue than comfort; it may mean the difference

between life and death. If your skin and garments become wet, the onset of hypothermia is speeded up.

There are two broad strategies for staying dry in the wilderness: care in selecting appropriate clothing and equipment; and making sure that clothing and equipment are treated with water-repellent agents.

This survey covers a selection and uses of various waterproofing preparations available for specialist outdoor equipment, footwear and clothing.

Preparation. Waterproofing agents work by bonding to the material to which they are applied and forming an impervious and/or hydroscopic layer on the material. *Hydroscopic* means that the surface does not allow water droplets to flow out and 'wet' the surface; instead, the water stays as droplets on the surface. In order to achieve proper bonding between the waterproofing agent and the material being proofed, you must ensure that the material is free from dirt, grease, oil or other substances that may interfere with the proofing.



Eight-year-old Marie Sleeman reckons you can't beat the good ol' plastic Mac for a wet day in the bush. *Chris Baxter*

Most preparations have instructions about cleaning the material before you apply the proofing agents. Make sure that you follow those instructions or you may be wasting your time and money putting on a product that will not work.

Some manufacturers make specific cleaning products to prepare the material properly, although often a gentle scrub and/or wash with warm, mild, soapy water will suffice.

For wax, cream, oil and spray-type products it is necessary to ensure that the material is dry before applying the proofing agent. Again, consult the manufacturer's instructions to find out what is suitable for the product you are using.

Good preparation may mean the difference between a successful waterproofing job and a soggy mess.

Materials. One of the problems with waterproofing materials is that different types of materials require very different waterproofing agents. For example, natural fibres such as cotton require totally different

Wild Equipment Survey Waterproofing agents

	For	Ingredients (when stated)	Type	Quantity (millilitres [ml] or grams [g])	Approx price, \$
Aqua USA Boot Guard	Leather	High density silicone oil	Oil, rub on	120 ml	4.95
Aqua Proof (unknown) Water Proofor	Leather, canvas, nylon, suede	PTE, silicone, anti-mould	Aerosol (no CFC)	400 g	8.95
Aquaseal USA Leather Waterproofing & Conditioner	Leather	Petroleum distillate	Wax, rub on	56 g	5.95
Ariko USA WaterGuard	Leather, natural fibres, synthetic fabrics	Silicone (10%)	Aerosol (no CFC)	355 ml	8.50
Bikymex Australia Waterproofing Treatment	Canvas goods		Liquid, brush on	2000 ml	21.95
Colanti Germany BiWax	Leather		Cream, rub on	75 g	7.95
RainProof	Leather, textiles		Pump spray	150 ml	13.95
Gardshol Australia Prot All	Leather, fabrics (natural and synthetic)		Pump spray	250 ml	8.95
Glenns New Zealand Wotter	Oilskins, nylon, synthetic fabrics, jagsara		Liquid, emulsion	250 ml	9.95
Hydrex	Wool, cotton		Liquid, emulsion	250 ml	13.95
Grangers UK G Wax	Leather	Beeswax	Wax, rub on	140 g	7.40
Super Pal	Clothing		Liquid, reverse	100 ml	8.95
Wax Spray	Wax cotton clothing		Aerosol (no CFC)	200 ml	8.95
Fabul	Cotton/canvas, nylon, polyester	Silicone	Aerosol (no CFC)	400 ml	9.95
Nylorol	Lightweight nylon, synthetic fabrics		Pump spray	125 ml	9.95
Supergol	Breathable fabrics (including Gore-Tex)		Aerosol (no CFC)	200 ml	12.95

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treatments from synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon. When selecting a proofing compound, carefully read the instructions to ensure that it is appropriate for the material you are trying to proof. Seek advice from sales assistants in outdoor shops; they should be familiar with products they sell and be able to help you to make the proper selection.

Synthetic fibres are typically made from long-chain polymers (complex molecules) derived from petrochemical bases. Due to their nature, they only allow specific compounds, generally also derived from petrochemical bases, to adhere to them. The wrong proofing compound will actually 'fall off' synthetic materials if applied in error. Although the fibres themselves may be quite waterproof, the gaps between the woven fibres will allow the passage of water. Proofing agents will attempt to seal these gaps. Polyurethane-backed fabrics rely on an impervious laminate of polyurethane to keep water out. However, the PU layer is subject to wear, and so will need re-treating to keep it waterproof.

Some synthetic fibres such as nylon, polyester, and Dacron are specifically designed to proof one type of synthetic material, while others are for more general use.

Natural fibres—cotton and wool—are formed from very different molecules. Wool is naturally water-resistant and stays warm

when it is wet. Lanolin secreted from the sheep's skin greatly enhances the water-resistant property of wool on the sheep's back, but it is removed from wool during processing. Adding proofing to wool is like replacing the naturally occurring lanolin. Proofing wool seals the fibres, allowing the garment to shed water more effectively and absorb less water when wet. Cotton readily absorbs water and loses its insulating properties when wet. For this reason, untreated cotton is not really suitable for prolonged usage in serious outdoor activities. However, applying a proofing compound to cotton can improve its performance to an acceptable level. If you are using cotton garments, or tents, they must be regularly treated to maintain water-repellency. Waxed and oiled cotton garments rely on the wax or oil to exclude water, but the treated fabric can be quite clammy. Stockmen's overcoats and some motorcycle jackets are examples of these fabrics.

Canvas is a very heavily woven cotton fabric commonly used for packs and (heavyweight) tents. When wet, the material fibres swell and tend to reduce the size of the gaps in the weave, effectively excluding water. In heavy rain, however, water will eventually get through. Applying a canvas-specific proofing agent can make the canvas quite waterproof.

Manufacturers usually treat processed leather used for outdoor equipment (such as

boots and gloves) with a specific compound to make it water-resistant. Often the tanning process is an integral part of this procedure. Consequently, some manufacturers recommend proofing agents that are compatible with their products. The three main types of compounds used for proofing leather are waxes, creams and oils. Waxes and creams provide heavy-duty waterproofing, and also soak into the leather a little if they are applied warm and rubbed in. Oils are also rubbed in and tend to penetrate the leather more than waxes. They are often used to soften and condition the leather.

Suede is normally used for dress shoes and garments and is not very suitable for outdoor usage. Its rough surface tends to catch and absorb water. Proofing agents (usually silicone sprays) can make it waterproof but the treatment wears off quickly.

Gore-Tex is a synthetic fibre with a difference; it is actually a laminate composed of a special membrane sandwiched between protective layers of fabric. The membrane provides the water barrier; its pores are small enough to exclude liquid water while allowing water vapour from perspiration to pass through. The outer fabric of Gore-Tex is usually treated with a compound to make it hydroscopic; this makes water bead on the surface, and stops it becoming unduly sodden. When applying a proofing agent to Gore-Tex, it is critical to ensure that the compound does not clog or otherwise affect the membrane. Oils, creams and waxes are not suitable. The various types of silicone-based pump sprays, aerosols and immersion washes are suitable but, again, check carefully that the compound is suitable and will not damage the Gore-Tex.

Application. Careful application of water-proofing compounds ensures maximum effectiveness. If you are in any doubt about whether the compound will affect the appearance or function of the item you wish to treat, test it first. For fabrics, treat a small, non-visible area. The treatment may affect the colour of the fabric. If the compound contains strong solvents that are unsuitable for the fabric, it may damage the fabric. Be careful, especially if an expensive parka, tent or sleeping-bag is at stake.

Apply waxes, creams and oils when warm, but avoid using excessive heat. This aids the penetration and bonding to the surface being treated. For waxes, buffing off any excess wax and adding a shine can improve the proofing effect.

Apply sprays evenly, and not too thickly. A couple of light applications are better than one heavy one. Do not hold the nozzle too close to the surface being treated.

In regard to liquid applications, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Immersion treatments can be done either in a washing-machine or by hand. Remove all traces of detergent from the fabrics before treating them. The garments are then 'washed' in a diluted solution of the proofing agent, after which they are rinsed, spun or wrung, and finally dried.

Re-treatment. All proofing agents wear off eventually, so the best approach is regularly to re-treat the equipment and clothing that need to be waterproof. Not all proofing agents

Wild Equipment Survey Waterproofing agents continued

	For	Ingredients (when stated)	Type	Quantity (millilitres (ml) or grams (g))	Approx. price, \$	
Joseph Lloyd (Wurpro) Australia	Dubbin	Animal fat	Paste, rub on	125 g	5.80	
	Boat Glo	Leather	Beeswax	Wax, rub on	250 ml	7.95
	Dry Proof	Oiled cotton	Oil	Oil, rub on	200 g	7.95
	Dry Seal	Tents, heavy canvas articles and seams	Hydrocarbons, lipolates	Paste, rub on	1000 ml	16.95
	Dry Coe	Lightweight canvas, lightweight synthetic fabrics, tents	Silicone	Liquid, rub on	1000 ml	18.95
	Montardi Australia Bewell	Leather		Tube wax, rub on	100 ml	10.95
Nikwax UK	Liquid Nikwax	Leather		Liquid, rub on	125 ml	7.95
	Aqueous Nikwax	Leather	Water base	Paste, rub on	125 ml	11.95
	Cotton Proof TX10	Cotton		Liquid, immerse	300 ml	12.95
	Non Tack Wax	Wax cotton	Polymer-reinforced wax	Wax, rub on	150 g	12.95
	Polar Proof	Fibreglass and fleece, wool clothing, synthetic and insulated clothing		Liquid, immerse	300 ml	14.95
	TX10	Cotton tents, unbacked clothing, down, natural fabrics and fillings, synthetic fabrics and fillings		Liquid, immerse	300 ml	15.00
	TX Direct	Breathable waterproof fabrics		Liquid, immerse	300 ml	16.95
	Telnik	PU nylon, neoprene-backed nylon, polyester		Pump spray	500 ml	17.95
Norvika Laboratories USA Ten Seconds	Leather, suede, nylon, mesh, canvas, rubber	Ethyl acetate, petroleum naphtha	Aerosol (no CFC)	170 g	10.95	
Outgear Australia Resproofing Agent	PU-backed synthetic fabrics		Liquid, brush on	200 ml	12.95	
Snow Seal USA Snow Seal	Leather	Beeswax	Wax, rub on	200 g	7.70	
Wurpro Australia Wurpro	Leather, suede, fabrics		Aerosol (no CFC)	250 g	7.95	



TO A ROSSI TREKKER, IT'S JUST ANOTHER BUMP IN THE ROAD.



The thought of attempting to conquer Cradle Mountain is enough to set any bushwalker quaking in their boots. Unless, of course, those boots are a pair of Rossi Trekkers.

That's because the Trekker is designed and manufactured in Australia, specifically for Australian bushwalking conditions.

Inside and out, the Rossi Trekker is an extremely hardwearing boot that combines highly innovative design with four generations of boot making experience to offer you the very best in both comfort and quality.

The exterior of the boots feature full leather uppers, the main body of which is constructed from a single piece of leather. This means they are not only easy to waterproof, they're also easier to keep free from heavy mud deposits. Built-in padded ankle supports and cushions ensure that the Trekker is easy to wear, too.



The Trekker is fully lined with both leather and cambrelle, offering superior comfort and a snug fit, and the internal lining keeps your feet cool when it's hot, and warm when it's not.

The very popular resin rubber "Rossi Lite" sole features air cushioning to absorb impact, from heel to ball joint, and

the moulded polyurethane midsole wedge gives you added comfort and support all day long. The superior tread design offers you a grip strong enough to handle the toughest conditions.

Although heavy on features, the Rossi Trekker is actually a very light boot, so you're not carrying around any excess weight. And it's light on your pocket too, compared to many imported brands.

If you're after a bushwalking boot that can take the most hostile terrain in its stride, try a pair of Rossi Trekkers on for size.

Rossi Boots
WORK HARD - PLAY HARD

TRIX

Ski repair equipment

First aid items for ski tourers, by Glenn van der Knijff

In ski touring and XCD skiing a great deal of stress is constantly applied to skis and boots—eventually, either due to bad luck or wear-and-tear, something will 'give', leaving you in an awkward position. On weekend trips you may not worry too much about carrying repair equipment, but if you're on a week-long trip in the heart of the Snowy Mountains (for example) you will need to take some form of repair kit. While it is not realistic to carry replacement items for every possible contingency, here are some that do not take up much space or weight in your pack. Usually, you will need only one set per group. Many of the items will be part of the regular list of 'accessories' which you already take in case of emergencies.

On long ski tours where a lot of terrain is covered it is a good idea to carry a spare ski tip—a broken ski forward of the boot would be a disaster. This item can be bought at most major outdoor shops and is simply inserted over the broken end of the ski.

A Phillips-head screw driver, or a Swiss Army knife with one built in, is a handy implement. Most cross-country bindings are attached to the skis with this type of screw and loose bindings are a problem. Glue can be applied into the hole before re-inserting the screw.

Glue can be used to help tighten loose bindings, and can be handy in many other applications.

Tape, such as plastic electricians' tape, is useful for repairs to damaged skis and stocks. Using a splint, a broken stock can be temporarily repaired. I've even seen it used to hold together a ski (broken forward of the boot) that was only held in one piece by the metal edge which had not been broken.

Cord is handy for many uses but, particularly when the top section of a three-pin binding is damaged. The cord can be used to make a makeshift 'cable' for attaching around the rear of the boot and the binding. (An item titled *Going to Some Lengths in Equipment in Wild* no 35 has further details.)

On extended tours it is often a good idea to carry a small amount of waterproofing agent to keep boots in a dry condition and comfortable to wear. (See the survey in this issue.)

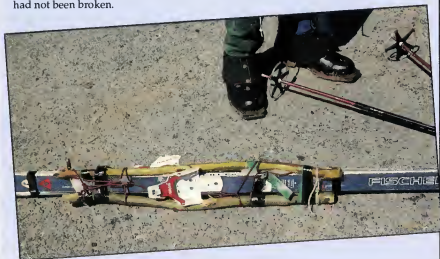
Broken bootlaces can also be a problem. Spare laces of a decent length are easy to carry or you can use cord.

Using a ski pole that has no basket can be a pain in the neck. Spare baskets are sold at ski shops and are most welcome if you don't enjoy retrieving your pole from the snow.

After a lot of use the three-pin holes on the sole of your ski boot can become enlarged, causing the boot to wobble in the binding. Cross-country ski shops sell metal toe-pieces which easily screw into the sole of the boot, making the boot more stable in the binding for better control.

With a little imagination just about any problem can be temporarily overcome. A severely damaged ski (see photo) underneath the boot can be adequately repaired. In this example, two saplings have been used to brace the ski and make it usable. The poor fellow who used this ski broke it early on an extended tour in the Mt Jagalunga area of the Snowy Mountains, New South Wales, yet he was able to complete the trip! While not ideal, it was better than walking.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send to the address at the end of this department.



(even of a similar type) are compatible, so if you change brands or types make sure that they are compatible by doing a test application first.

Stitching and seam-sealing. Stitching and seams are worthy of special consideration when waterproofing equipment. For example, applying a wax to a leather ski boot is quite easy and effective; however, the boot welt (where the leather upper is stitched to the sole) can provide a route for water to enter the boot. No amount of wax is capable of stemming this flow in the longer term. The bellows action of the flexing boot actually pumps water through the holes where the stitching is. Similarly, seams in tent flies and floors are very difficult to seal effectively with fabric-proofing compounds. It is best to seal welts and seams with specifically designed seam-sealants (which are not part of this review).

Peter Campbell

TENTS

Slings and arrows

Many walkers and ski tourers would be aware of the *First Arrow*, a two-person, four-season tent designed and made in Australia by Wilderness Equipment. Derived from the *First Arrow*, the *Second Arrow* is a double-skinned, lightweight, two-person tent which has all the advantages and detail of the original tent. Though it is designed to handle the harshest of conditions, good ventilation ensures that this tent is suitable for use during the milder months. The shape of the tent is that of a tapered tunnel and some of its major design features include fast pitching with a minimum of only three pegs, an inner tent that can be erected on its own using touch-taps or integrally pitched, the choice of either a normal or heavy-duty floor—and supplied as standard with each tent are five 230 millimetre long aluminium snow/sand pegs. The *Second Arrow* weighs about 2.2 kilograms, or 2.6 kilograms with the heavy-duty floor, and sells for around \$600.

RUCKSACKS

South of the border

Johnson Camping has supplied us with information on a range of packs called *Arebea*. The *My Amigo 21* has a large main compartment and a full front-length pocket. Slightly larger is the *Bandido 23*, which features a mesh pocket on the outside and a large main compartment. Both packs feature a one-piece back- and shoulder-strap and 'Mexican sling' arm loops, hold 21 and 23 litres, respectively, and sell for \$39.95.

The *Carumba 35* has four compartments of varying sizes and a web pouch on the inside and outside. This 35 litre pack also features the 'Mexican sling' and the full wrap-around suspension system. RRP \$59.95.

The *Gringo* is available in 35 or 50 litre sizes. Both *Gringos* have a large main compartment, an internal frame, an elasticized hood with security pocket, and a mesh pocket on the front. The 'Mexican sling' loops also feature, as does the wrap-around, a one-piece shoulder-strap suspension system, and a waist-belt which helps to stabilize the load. RRP \$89.95, or RRP \$98.00 for the 50 litre. All

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In fact, barring mechanical damage (cuts, abrasions, pin-holes) it will remain fully functional as long as the fabrics to which it is laminated remain serviceable.

In stark contrast to the situation with other waterproof fabrics there is nothing in the way of normal cleaning, washing or dry-cleaning that you

can do which will harm your Gore-Tex garment - in fact, a good wash after any regular use will serve only to extend its life.

More often than not, everything that doesn't affect Gore-Tex fabric will degrade competitive fabrics - to the point where they leak. Take one example: in temperatures below zero the coatings on coated fabrics become stiff and brittle and will crack and chip away from the flex and wear points on a garment.

Gore-Tex fabrics with their supple membrane are a minimum of 5 times more durable to cold and wet, flex and abrasion.

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Advice and Service: Consult trained shop staff and our User's Guide when choosing a garment for your outdoor needs. For service phone W.L. Gore and Associates free on 008 226 703.



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packs can be bought in the colours Carbona Black with Tropical Blue, Gusto Green or Candente Red.

Peak experience?

Made and distributed in Australia by *Alpine Concepts* is a range of day packs called the *Summit* series. The smallest of the three packs is the *Torres*. It holds 23 litres and incorporates a body which is accessed with one zip around the top and down the sides, and a zipped outside pocket useful for maps and the like. RRP \$49.00. The 24 litre *Wimmera* also has an outside pocket but access is through a zip around the 'lid' of the flat top of the pack. RRP \$54.00. The largest of the three is the 26 litre *Extreme*, which has no zips. Access is through the top only, which is closed with a draw-cord and buckles. The contents can be stabilized with the aid of straps on each side of the pack and there are two handy straps on the back of the pack for securing narrow items such as an ice-axe. RRP \$57.95. All three packs come in black, blue and red, or jade and purple, and are made of Cordura, although the *Wimmera* comes in canvas as well (RRP \$79.95). None of the packs has any back-padding so careful packing is required to avoid discomfort.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Huff and puff

Fibrepile and its many successors have never been very good at keeping the wind out unaided. They'll keep you warm if it's still, but you need something more when the wind blows. The *DB Stuff Windbloc* jacket is the first garment we've seen made of Polartec 1000, a double-sided synthetic fleece slightly lighter than Polartec 300 but with a wind-proof, breathable layer somehow knitted into the middle—like a mystery filling in a sandwich. The *Windbloc* jacket has two zipped pockets and a high collar of double-thickness Polartec. Cuffs and waist-band are of the same material. RRP is \$185 with full-length zip; there's a *Windbloc pullover* for a few dollars less.



Cigana Gypsy Pullover. Right, Trezeta Antelao boot. Far right, top, Rossi-Lite 240 walking shoe. Far right, bottom, Nike Air Rhyolite boots.

Your fortune assured

Pertex 5 is a cloth made up of closely woven fabrics which is extremely light yet hard-wearing, wind- and water-resistant, and is able to transmit moisture from the inside out—suitable for many outdoor sports. *Cigana Sportswear*, an Australian company based at Berridale, near the Snowy Mountains, has released the *Gypsy* series of garments

specifically designed for outdoor use such as cross-country skiing and bushwalking. The *Gypsy Pullover* is a long-sleeved jacket which features a concealed hood in a high stand-up collar, a pouch pocket, an elasticized hip-cord and conveniently packs into its built-in internal bum bag. It weighs 225 grams and sells for RRP \$79.95. Its little brother, the *Gypsy Vest*, is a sleeveless jacket that has a side zip-pocket, stand-up collar, a stretchy Lycra back and zips up the front. Weighing in at only 150 grams, it retails at \$59.95 and folds into its pocket when not in use.

Bellissimo!

The *Cervino Lady*, *Antelao* and *Pelmo* are all walking boots of a similar style from *Trezeta*. The boots feature a one-piece upper, Cambrelle lining and a Skywalk double-density sole with rand. Anfibio leather is used in the construction of the *Pelmo* and it incorporates a Torsion II (rather than a Torsion I) mid-sole. The *Cervino Lady* and *Antelao* retail for \$199, the *Pelmo* for \$249, and all are available through *Scout Outdoor Centres*.



Also available through *Scout Outdoor Centres* are specialist boots by *Aku*. *Aku* boots are made from a number of basic components including one patented by *Aku*. This fabric, known as *Aku Air 8000*, is formed by layers of polyester and felt which, when joined together, render the fabric water-repellent and porous at the same time. This material is used in the upper of the *Slope*, a light and soft yet robust walking boot. The *Slope* also has a Vibram sole and is lined with Gore-Tex. RRP \$269. The *Boite* is a large mountaineering boot that comprises a Vibram sole, a one-piece upper, a lining of Gore-Tex and a wrapping collar. Useful also for trekking in tough country, this stiff boot is rigid and able to be fitted with crampons. RRP \$299.

Bootiful

Rossiter's has supplied us with information on two of their new Rossi boots. The *Rossi-Lite 240* and *Rossi-Lite Trekker 280* are durable lightweight boots designed not only for bushwalking but also for casual wear. An air-cushion sole minimizes the pounding effect of walking and the absorption of shock is improved with the use of a polyurethane mid-sole. The styles of the two boots are quite different—the 240 resembles a 'shoe' with its low cut while the 280 offers increased ankle support in its 'boot' shape. The 280 has an upper of Dualtan leather which is designed for high-quality walking boots and is lined with full-grain leather and Cambrelle around foam

padding. A pair of size 8 240s weighs one kilogram and 280s 1.2 kilograms. The prices of the boots are reflected in their style, with the 240 and 280 selling for around \$105 and \$160, respectively.



On a wing and a prayer

The *Vasque Alpha* boot is designed for first-time bushwalkers or for those who have not worn walking boots before. Made from traditional materials, the boots are lightweight, more flexible and heavily padded for extra comfort so they need no wearing in. They can also be worn for casual use. The upper is foam-padded Cordura with suede leather. There is a padded, gusseted tongue and the boot is lined with absorbent nylon which helps the boot to dry quickly. A durable synthetic insole with steel shank supports and stabilizes the foot and the Alpha-Flex insole insert enables a cushioned forward stride. Extra padding comes with the Variable Fit System foot-bed which absorbs shock. A pair of size 8 boots weighs 1.1 kilograms and sells for RRP \$120. *Vasque* boots are distributed in Australia by *Red Wing*.



For air heads

New from *Nike*, a company probably better known for its athletic sports gear than for walking boots, is the *Air Rhyolite*. Stability is provided by a full-length polyurethane mid-sole, an inner sole made of recycled materials, and a solid rubber regrid-outsole



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the tough get into..**



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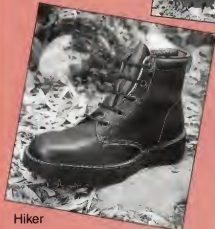
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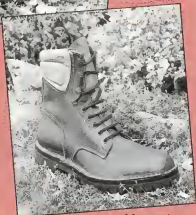


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EQUIPMENT

with a raised sidewall. Additional cushioning comes with the aid of Nike's famous Nike Air—the Air Sole unit consists of a pressurized gas encapsulated in the thick membrane of the mid-sole, and is placed near the heel of the boot. The upper is made of full-grain leather and there is a gusseted, leather tongue to keep out debris. The boots weigh 1.3 kilograms for a pair of size 8 boots and sell for RRP \$260.

MISCELLANEOUS

Sole survival

Most walkers, and indeed anyone who has worn shoes or boots in tough conditions, will be familiar with aching and tired feet. With the help of these new *Sof Sole* products, this need no longer be the case—late last year a test conducted by the University of New South Wales found that *Sof Sole* proved superior to well-known products such as Sorbothane in reducing shock forces and increasing impact and energy absorption. The smallest of the three products we have for review is the *Sof Heel* pad, a palm-sized pad which inserts into the heel of your boot. RRP \$15.95. The other items are the foot-length *Sof Walk* pad and *Sof Hike* pad. Designed primarily for day-to-day walking, the *Sof Walk* pad costs RRP \$34.95. The *Sof Hike* pad is Cambrell-covered and is for the more strenuous activities like bushwalking and ski touring. RRP \$29.95. All the products can be trimmed to fit if necessary, are machine-washable and simply fit inside your boot. The *Sof Sole* products are made by *Implus Corporation* and distributed in Australia by *Sports Circle*.

Sports Circle also distributes spray products designed to clean, waterproof and deodorize shoes. As the name suggests, the *Ten Seconds* products are claimed to take ten seconds to do their job. The three sprays that we've seen are pretty much self-explanatory in their tasks—the *Ten Seconds Suede & Nubuck Cleaner*, *Waterproofs* (for waterproofing leather, suede, nylon, mesh, canvas and rubber) and *Foot & Shoe Spray* (for deodorizing, absorbing sweat and aiding in the cure of athlete's foot). All sprays are extremely flammable but contain no CFCs. RRP \$10.95.

Squirt alert

Many canoeists and kayakers will not be familiar with the *Squirt* boat, a shorter, very strong and quite heavy version of a slalom kayak designed for acrobatic canoeing. This boat, not suitable for beginners who cannot Eskimo-roll, is not nearly as buoyant as a normal kayak so it is difficult to maintain control, but at the same time this is what makes it so manoeuvrable, and enables the user to complete moves such as a nose-stand and cart-wheels. To be of best use, the boat should be made for you so that it fits you like a glove. The *Big Foot* is the only *Squirt* boat produced in Australia, and the cost of one is upward from around \$750. If you're interested in having one made for you, phone *Big Foot* on (059) 96 2966. ■

New products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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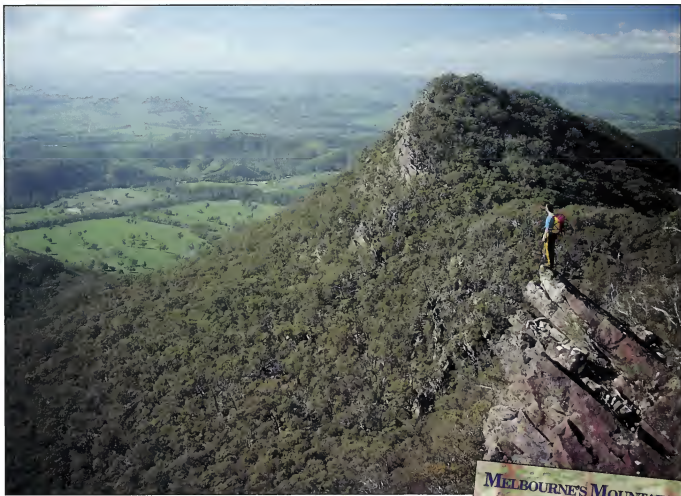
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SAVING WILD AUSTRALIA

New books on environmental issues



BOOKS

Melbourne Mountains—Exploring the Great Divide on foot and by car

by John and Marion Siseman
(Pindari Publications, 1993, RRP \$19.95).

If you like to combine walking in forests with poking around gold-mine and sawmill relics, then this book is for you.

There are notes on 73 bushwalks and 16 car tours, most of which are day trips or less. The book is pitched at walkers with limited experience, but even the most hardened will find something of interest.

The area covered is the range country north-east of Melbourne. Chapters are centred around the towns of Alexandra, Healesville, Jamieson, Marysville, Powelltown, Walhalla, Warburton and Woods Point. Many of the places will be familiar to Melbournites but the extensive coverage guarantees something new for even a regular visitor to the region.

A 'Melbourne mountain'—Cathedral Mountain (870 metres) is surprisingly rugged. Glenn Tempest

Presentation is plain and practical although the chunky hand-drawn maps lack detail and are hard to read at times. The numerous black-and-white photographs are of varying interest. Walk information, such as distance and degree of difficulty, is well presented but has been omitted from the list at the front of the book, making it hard to choose an appropriate activity.

The text contains plenty of interesting historical information which adds value to many of the walks and tours. As well as a good guidebook, it is a good read. But presenting information in large blocks of text suitable for reading makes it harder to use as a guidebook.

Information on current commercial logging has also found its way into the



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book. Much of it is dubious. For example, there is the extraordinary statement that mountain ash timber 'surpasses all other hardwoods for durability' when in fact, despite its great value as a furniture and veneer timber, it is only fit for indoor use due to its amazing lack of durability. The authors' advice to the reader who encounters clear-felling while on a walk is to 'ignore' it. My advice is to have a good, long look and a good, long think.

Considering the current campaign for a new National Park in the Central Highlands, it was disappointing to find no mention of the area's forest conservation issues. The loss of old-growth forest and the threat of logging to the Leadbeater's possum (an endangered species), for example, should have at least, rated a mention.

In summary, the car tours are adequate but hampered at times by a lack of specific information. The rear cover blurb implies that the book is useful for cycle touring, mountain biking, prospecting and fishing. While this may be good for sales, it is stretching the point as no specific information on any of these activities is provided. The great strength of the book lies in its comprehensive collection of day walks and associated historical information on timber and gold—both subjects of perennial interest—and it is worth buying for this alone. I'll certainly be keeping a copy close at hand.

Grant Da Costa

lived in rain forests around what is now Lake Eyre and hunted the giant *Diprotodon*?

These questions are raised by the tantalizing remnants of prehistoric Australia which can still be seen if you know where to look. *The Riches of Ancient Australia* is a guide to those places. Its pages are full of canoe trees, dinosaur bones, cave paintings, stone-axe quarries, and clues to a past now lost.

Well known for her earlier books, particularly *The Moth Hunters*, which dealt with Aboriginal occupation of the Alps, Josephine Flood has been engaged in archaeology (as well as two Himalayan mountaineering expeditions!) for many years.

Setting out location, from whom permission (if any) is needed, and the main features to look for, *The Riches of Ancient Australia* will help you to find the past in Australia's landscape. There are good black-and-white illustrations as well as diagrams and maps.

At times, the selection of sites has not been comprehensive. Although the spectacular dinosaur footprints in Queensland have been dealt with at length, there is nothing about the far older footprints in Victoria. But it is inevitable that some selection must be made, and generally the coverage is very thorough.

Ours is a young country but the oldest continent. As we explore the wild parts of Australia, there is always present, but often hidden, the dimension of its ancient heritage. *The Riches of Ancient Australia* will help to reveal that hidden dimension.

Brian Walters

10 Questions: The Facts and Figures of Australia's Forests and Forest Industries

(National Association of Forest Industries, 1992, free).

It is hard to make the logging of our old-growth native forests seem sensible or pretty, but the National Association of Forest Industries is trying. Its latest brochure, expensively produced, is full of wilderness photos which belie the real ugliness and long-term damage of logging. It is provided with footnotes in a way which adds an air of substance.

The basis of the material in the booklet is said to be the report of the Resources Assessment Commission. In this text, the values of old-growth forests were found to be not only considerable, but irreplaceable. However, the booklet only quotes selectively from that report. One of the RAC's few firm recommendations was to have all logging in old-growth forests phased out by 1995.

If space allowed, it would be instructive to quote at length from *10 Questions*. The trouble is that the booklet takes so many words to say so little.

A good example is Question 10: 'Aren't forest industries subsidized?' One might have thought the question at least deserved a 'yes' or 'no' reply. I read the lengthy answer. It is well written and elegantly footnoted. But it makes no attempt to answer the question posed.

The reason for this obfuscation is obvious. The logging of native forests is subsidized to the tune of millions of dollars a year, by way of the provision, at public expense, of the infrastructure necessary for logging (such as

roads and replanting). Although the industry pays royalties, the sums involved come nowhere near to covering the cost of providing these services (let alone the cost of the wood, the cost of the land on which the trees are grown, and the cost of the huge volume of water lost through felling). The industry cannot escape this, but is doing its best to hide it.

BW

Water Pollution: Causes and Effects in Australia and New Zealand

by D W Connell (University of Queensland Press, third edition 1993, RRP \$29.95).

Water is an essential life-support system for all plants and animals. Its corruption threatens us all.

The problems of water pollution have been prominent in Australia of late, with blue-green algae, salinity and even raw sewage making headlines.

In a scholarly and technical manner, Connell provides a most helpful overview of water-pollution issues in a readily accessible form.

BW

Environmental Protection and Legal Change

edited by Tim Bonyhady (The Federation Press, 1992, RRP \$28.00).

Of special interest to lawyers will be Tim Bonyhady's excellent collection of papers dealing with the impact of law on the environment and the way in which the law itself has been moulded by changes in community attitudes to the environment over recent years.

The book deals with constitutional issues, standing in the courts, property rights, environmental protest, the criminal law, and several other topics.

The papers are of a high standard, and this book will have an ongoing impact in years to come.

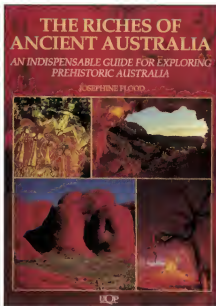
BW

Uluru and Kata Tjuta: a geological history

by I P S Sweet and I H Crick (Australian Government Publishing Service, 1992, RRP \$9.95).

Most guides to National Parks describe the flora, the fauna—and sometimes their human history. Geology, if mentioned at all, is considered in the simplest terms without doing justice to either the science or its significance to the landscape. When a National Park is comprised largely of rocks, however, geology cannot be ignored.

This book expounds geologists' beliefs about the origin of the great monoliths in Uluru National Park (as opposed to Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara interpretations). It does so in terms that are neither too technical nor too patronizing, a difficult balance to achieve when explaining a complex subject. There is a glossary for the geologically naïve but one soon becomes familiar with arcane terms like 'arkose' and 'orogenesis'. Reading the book, one can hardly wait for all five kilometres of the Mt Currie Conglomerate to be exposed and so reveal the domes of Kata Tjuta in their full magnificence!



The Riches of Ancient Australia

by Josephine Flood (University of Queensland Press, 1993, RRP \$29.95).

What sort of people built the extensive system of fish traps at Lake Condah in western Victoria and lived in the stone houses nearby? What was life like for the people who occupied Kutikina cave on the Franklin river between 20 000 and 14 000 years before the present, so long ago that some of the bones picked clean by forgotten generations and left lying on the floor belong to animals now extinct? How would the Australian landscape have seemed to the men and women who



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aaaaaaagghh!

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Reviewed in this issue of *Wild*, **BASEClimb** is the film story of the Australian expedition to climb and BASE jump the 6,258 metre Great Trango Tower in Pakistan.

Presented by National Geographic in 80 countries, this film is an adventure classic. Dick Smith said, "BASEClimb is one of the best adventure films I have ever seen".

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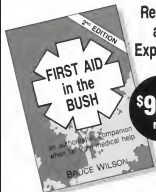
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I hope this surprising diversion into tourism by the Australian Geological Survey Organization is a success so that they will turn their skills and attention to other National Parks. Perhaps a time will come when the level of geological appreciation among the public will be such that new mineral deposits will be kept for the fascination of their origins and the beauty of their ore rather than extracted for their utility. Broken Hill National Park?

Stephen Garnett

First Aid in the Bush

by Bruce Wilson (Wilderness Publications, second edition 1993, RRP \$9.95).

This second edition is updated and expanded and the handy format has been retained. Cost constraints have dictated a return to standard paper with a waterproof cover; however, its small size enables adequate protection in a plastic bag.

First Aid in the Bush reflects the author's training as a mobile intensive-care ambulance officer, with a logical priority system according to the potential seriousness of the medical problem. Priority one includes airway obstruction, cardiac arrest and haemorrhage. Management suggestions assume that the patient may be in a remote location with a delay before professional help arrives. So the book aims to assist carers in treating the problem appropriately and encourages evacuation by emergency services in serious situations. This reflects the changing nature of search-and-rescue capability. A range of common medical and bush problems is covered succinctly.

The book is highly recommended for anyone interested in outdoor recreation. Ideally, however, it should serve as a reference, with at least one member of a party having undertaken a first aid course.

Steve Bennett

Classic New Zealand Adventures

by Jonathan Kennett, Johnny Mulhern, Greg Carlyon and Malcolm O'Neill (GP Publications, 1992, RRP \$16.95).

If you have any interest in visiting New Zealand for any 'wild' activity, including walking ('tramping') and mountaineering, this attractively produced little guidebook is probably worth buying. *Classic New Zealand* is a descriptive geographic listing of what's available. It has good maps and photos and covers both private and commercial activities. It is unusually detailed and comprehensive.

Chris Baxter

Cradle Mountain, Lake St Clair and Wells of Jerusalem National Parks

by John Chapman and John Siseman (Pindari Publications, third edition 1992, RRP \$18.95).

This third edition contains updates on track and access changes and is a useful addition to the library of casual and serious walkers.

Sara White

VIDEOS

BASEclimb

directed by Glenn Singleman, edited by Michael Balson (Icaris Films, 1992, \$29.90 from 26 Darling St, Balmain, NSW 2041).

The word BASE stands for building, antenna, span and earth, and those who leap off these formations are called BASE jumpers. Glenn Singleman is a mountaineer while Nic Feteris is a BASE jumper and, in an interesting twist to the usual adventure movie, each must teach the other the skills of his own sport.

Singleman's fear on his initial training jumps is very real, while Feteris is obviously out of his depth as a climber. All this serves to draw in the viewer, who can easily identify with each of these weaknesses. The story is further strengthened as both these young adventurers combine their skills to climb and then BASE jump successfully off Great Trango Tower in Pakistan, one of the highest vertical rock walls in the world. The final scene is probably the most outstanding piece of film ever shot anywhere in the Karakorum or Himalaya; a tribute to Singleman, Feteris, renowned British cameraman Leo Dickinson, and all those who contributed to the production.

Glenn Tempest

MAPS

Camping in Victoria-A Guide to Campsites in Parks, Forests and Reserves

(Victorian Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 1993, RRP \$4.50).

Macalister River Watershed

S R and P N Brookes (published by the cartographers, revised and extended issue [no 21] 1993, RRP \$6.20).

The latest edition of this well-loved Victorian bushwalking map.

EXHIBITIONS

Park Perspectives

Contemporary black-and-white photos of Victoria's National Parks (Daimaru Gallery, March 1993).

In March there was a pocket of sanity amidst the gloss and dross of Daimaru; black-and-white photos of Victoria's National Parks. The exhibition and accompanying poster series are impressive reminders of the diversity and startling beauty of our 32 National Parks and associated reserves. Implicitly there is a strong conservation message. In fact, David Tatnall, one of the 12 photographers represented, is quoted as saying: 'Photography has played an enormous role in conservation campaigns in Australia over the past 20 years. Often a single image of a place is all that most people know of that place. In 1983 a single photograph by the Tasmanian photographer Peter Dombrovskis, 'Rock Island Bend', was what saved the Franklin River.'

We become accustomed to glossy, coloured photos which sometimes register as a blur. Here, the black-and-white images focus and sharpen our awareness of texture, light and balance in both the natural environment and its framed representation. The photographs don't simply 'factually' record place, they seem to express a deeper, more personal response to the land.

The 'Parks in Focus' notes for photography teachers and students are excellent. Few of us

are educated to read visual images with the same discrimination with which we read the written word. The posters are available from Victoria's Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 240 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne Vic 3002.

SW



The Serra Range, Grampians, western Victoria. One of the photos in the Park Perspectives exhibition. David Tatnall

OTHER TITLES RECEIVED

Bolivia-A Travel Survival Kit

by Deanna Swaney & Robert Strauss (Lonely Planet, second edition 1993, RRP \$22.95).

Finland-A Travel Survival Kit

by Markus Lehtipuu & Virpi Mkel (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$21.95).

Mediterranean Europe-On a Shoestring

by Tony Wheeler *et al* (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$32.95).

Mediterranean Europe Phrasebook-A Language Survival Kit

(Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$8.95).

Mexico-A Travel Survival Kit

by Tom Brosnahan *et al* (Lonely Planet, fourth edition 1993, RRP \$27.95).

Scandinavian & Baltic Europe-On a Shoestring

by Glenda Bendure *et al* (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$24.95).

Scandinavian Europe Phrasebook-A Language Survival Kit

(Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$8.95).

South Africa, Lesotho & Swaziland-A Travel Survival Kit

by Richard Everist & Jon Murray (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$22.95).

Western Europe-On a Shoestring

by Tony Wheeler *et al* (Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$32.95).

Western Europe Phrasebook-A Language Survival Kit

(Lonely Planet, 1993, RRP \$8.95). ■

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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LOGGING OFF WILDERNESS

How we all pay for it

I recently travelled by car from Canberra to Mt Buffalo, Victoria. With a day to spare, my partner and I forsook the Hume Highway for the scenery of the Snowy Mountains, driving by Cooma and Jindabyne over Dead Horse Gap and along the Alpine Way to Khancoban. The country we traversed that day ranks among the most magnificent in Australia: a beautiful and fragile environment steeped in history and rich in folklore.

We were, therefore, shocked when we entered the Kosciusko National Park a few kilometres south of Jindabyne. A surly National Park Officer demanded \$12 *merely for the use of the road*. Our attempts to discuss this outrageous fee were met with stubborn silence. It was too late to retrace our steps and locate another route to Mt Buffalo, so we paid our \$12 and drove on. More shocking news awaited us down the road.

No doubt the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service would cite the environmental importance of the Kosciusko region to justify the \$12 toll on the Alpine Way. I fully acknowledge that it costs money to protect wilderness, and I am quite willing to pay my share. But the NSW NPWS cannot here defend itself in this way. Less than ten kilometres up the road from the toll-house is the Thredbo ski resort. If protecting wilderness is the NSW NPWS's ambition, why have they so actively encouraged a ski resort in such an environmentally sensitive area?

Further down the Alpine Way the true reason for the \$12 charge became clear. We passed contractors sealing the road. The sealed section of the Alpine Way now extends many kilometres south of Geehi, and at Geehi itself a new bridge, a brick 'river walk' and an appealingly two day-shelter have been built. My \$12 are being used to make the southern region of Kosciusko National Park more accessible to tourists—irrespective of the resultant environmental damage. Far from contributing to the cost of maintaining wilderness, my \$12 are hastening its destruction.

This point is particularly painful when one reflects that, if the Alpine Way were completely sealed and kept clear of snow in winter, Thredbo would be roughly as far from Melbourne by car as it is from Sydney (about 530 and 500 kilometres, respectively). In other words, there is a real risk that Thredbo will attract large numbers of Melbourne skiers, resulting in more pressure for development with little or no regard for the environment.

What is to be made of all this? I think the point is clear enough. The National Parks services in this country are structured in a way that makes environmental degradation inevitable. It is very much in the interests of

the bureaucrats who run our National Parks to pander to—and indeed actively generate—use which then puts pressure on wilderness resources. (The recent spate of television advertisements encouraging people to visit Victoria's Grampians National Park makes this obvious.) And the irony is that we are *paying them*, through taxes and exorbitant road tolls, to do so.

Ian Ravenscroft
Turner, ACT

Your magazine has provided me with a great deal of enjoyment, inspiration and information. Long may it continue.

This note is to comment on your Track Notes section by Michael Christie on the Mt Solitary walk in *Wild* no 47.

Over the past 20 years I must have done this walk at least once a year, and it is sad to see the general track degradation—a combination of careless use and lack of National Parks & Wildlife Service funding to keep it up.

More importantly, the Track Notes gloss over the section from Katoomba across the Landslide. I recently walked the track from the kiosk at Katoomba to the top of Mt Solitary and back. This section has always been the most uncomfortable, and now the Landslide has slid again, making that part of the track very tricky, and possibly dangerous to some walkers.

Officially the track appears to be closed. We found a permanent 'track closed' sign near the Golden Staircase—not much use to us as we had traversed the Landslide once already. We returned the way we had come without incident. However, I have no idea of the general stability or likelihood of further slippage.

On a more general note, I do not always agree with your editorial comments, particularly about the environment, but you always seem to give other views an airing, so I thank you for keeping the forum open.

Martin Long
Dural, NSW

Outdoor equipment retailer's leap of logic

After having studied *Wild* over the past few years, I keep feeling the same obvious apprehensions. Why so many 'dag'-type cover photos, which could be mistaken for 1960s touched-up black-and-whites? Are you living in a time warp? Is this safe and conservative format the real *Wild*?

The cover shot of *Wild* no 48, taken crossing the Solly River in Tasmania, does little to inspire, let alone relate to current outdoor gear that has been available over the past ten years. Although I'm sure the vintage rucksack being

carried across the river has been near and far, let's face it, this is the 20th century and only those who find it difficult to relinquish such antiquities can identify with such cover images.

Without taking the comparison too far, I believe that, in general, your magazine (especially the layout) is very good. However, my other concern is, why so many similar repeat-type articles?

Is it not possible to shake the monkey off your back, break free of the shackles of 'dag' articles and give us some real adventure stories? Or is it that you just don't receive any, and instead continue with the same 'safe' format, edition after edition?

This magazine of yours is caging itself into a tight corner with a consistent conservatism that does little to inspire, or generate the enthusiasm necessary to enlighten or enlarge the boundaries for eager, hungry readers waiting to be educated and guided towards wild places. You have to admit that you are narrowing your appeal and potential for consumer recognition. Taking risks can be an adventure and, after all, it is adventure you seek to publish—is it not?

Shane Sleeman
Surrey Hills, Vic

Sexist cover-up

I am writing about your front cover of *Wild* no 48. I find the photo profoundly disturbing on a number of grounds. 1 It is sexist. A scantily clad male should not grace your cover. 2 Sexual deviation has no place in *Wild*. The gentleman in question is obviously a sado-masochist. 3 The model's pose is physically impossible. Nobody can carry a pack that large using leather shoulder-straps without a hip-belt.

I will not be dealing with the manufacturers of any of the products shown in the photo and will forward a copy of this letter to same.

I urge you to give serious consideration to my concerns and the letter from Winston Foug (Wildfire in *Wild* no 48).

Andrew Barnes
Croydon, Vic

Genetic imperative

It is good to see a quality publication like *Wild* providing a forum for readers' opinions in the Wildlife column. The fact that you printed the letter from Mr Graham Ross (*Wild* no 47), on an obviously controversial subject, demonstrates your editorial fairness...I have obeyed my 'genetic imperative' and hunted since I was a small boy—and I've taught my sons to hunt. I don't hunt duck, because I don't eat duck. However, I do eat venison, rabbit, quail and goat. I agree with Mr Woodward that I (as a hunter) could alternatively purchase these

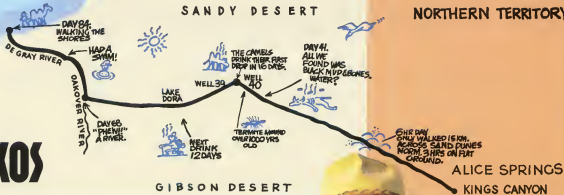
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foods (although not in your average supermarket) if I were so inclined. As a practising conservationist, I will hunt pigs, foxes and cats whenever I get the chance...I'll let you all in on a secret—hunters not only believe that they are as green as the rest of the green movement, they are the greenest of the greens! If any of your readers wish to explore the roots of this amazing belief, I suggest they obtain, from their libraries, a copy of Aldo Leopold's book *A Sand County Almanac*.

Robert Brown
Gladesville, NSW

The Science Show

Following Will Steffen's article on water treatment in *Wild* no 47, and the letters in *Wildfire* in *Wild* no 48, there are several points which should be clarified.

The issue of purifiers (as distinct from filters) which claim to remove or destroy viruses, bacteria and parasites by the use of iodine-based resins needs to be put into perspective. Viruses, if free-living in pure water (as in a laboratory), are not able to be physically filtered from water due to their extremely small size. In a practical situation, viruses do not exist in this state but are in company with other organisms and suspended particles in water. Viruses attach to these particles and are considered to be removed by any filter that has a porosity of below 0.4 microns. It would be foolish to guarantee 100 per cent virus removal with any filter, but then the only people who seem to be making an issue of virus removal are the (mostly) American companies using iodized resins in their products.

Testing for viruses in water is difficult and only a few large laboratories are able to perform these tests in Australia.

Cross-contamination from inlet to outlet is possible, as John Mather suggests, but this possibility can be minimized or eliminated by good filter design and proper handling procedures. You definitely don't need to boil water after using a Katadyn filter.

Katadyn filters are often criticized for their short output spout. This is a design feature of the Pocket Filter and the new Mini Filter (250 grams) which minimizes the possibility of output contamination. If contamination is suspected, the filter may be flushed with a few litres of water, which will clear organisms from the outlet. This is difficult to achieve with an outlet tube half a metre in length where a greater chance of colonization of organisms exists. All filters, Katadyn included, should be dried as much as possible before packing and should not have an inlet and outlet in close proximity.

As mentioned, but not emphasized in the survey, chemical pollution of drinking-water is not really an issue in Australia and the inclusion of activated carbon in filters to absorb chemicals leads to the colonization of the carbon by organisms which may then penetrate the filter membrane as they multiply. Carbon elements must be replaced regularly to prevent this.

In reference to the filters used by Don Owers, these are carbon units made to remove chlorine and sediments from treated water and have a minimum porosity of five microns, which allows all types of organisms to pass

through happily. I hope that Mr Owers doesn't mistakenly use this method for contaminated water.

A filter of 1.0 microns is considered to be effective in removing parasites (such as giardia) and less than 0.4 microns is required for removal of bacteria, which is still the most common source of water contamination...

Greg Christlo
Product Manager, Katadyn Products
Sirmeta Pty Ltd
Wollongong, NSW

Finding yourself in the future

I am writing this letter in response to the article 'Where on Earth Am I' in *Wild* no 47. I thank the author for his considerable insight in using this new technology in such an environment and demonstrating the GPS's valuable navigational assistance. I, too, have considered the use of the global positioning system in situations where aneroid barometers as altimeters are inadequate. However, I feel that the author could have looked for Australian-made GPS devices first and included these in his article. A little research (by speaking to such companies as those who supply marine navigation GPS units) would have pointed out that an Australian company, Auspace, has a GPS unit with, what I consider to be, features superior to both the Sony and Trimble units mentioned in the article. It is proudly made in Australia with a competitive price of around \$1800. The unit, called the Milnav, will be available from Auspace, PO Box 17, Mitchell, ACT 2911 in round about June 1993.

Dominic Lancaster
Canberra, ACT

Business talk

...Congratulations on your performance in the Australian Small Business Awards! The award was well deserved, your publications are of superior quality and make enjoyable, informative reading. Keep up the good work!

K M Campbell
Bardon, Qld

Blaming babies

After the Rio summit last year there have been many claims such as those in G D Hollingworth's letter (*Wild* no 47) stating that overpopulation is a fundamental cause of our environmental problems.

How then can we explain these statistics? The north contains 1 billion people, compared to the 4.5 billion in the south. However, the north consumed five-sixths of the world's resources.

Paradoxically, it seems fewer people make more environmental damage than more people.

I enjoy reading *Wild*'s informative Green Pages, and the Action Box contains practical ways to help. Keep it up. Blaming the degradation of the environment on babies is ineffectual and merely diverts attention from our need to change our consumer life-style.

Naomi Sullivan
Belgrave, Vic

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address, for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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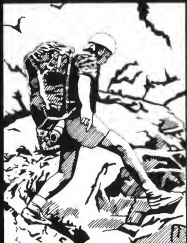
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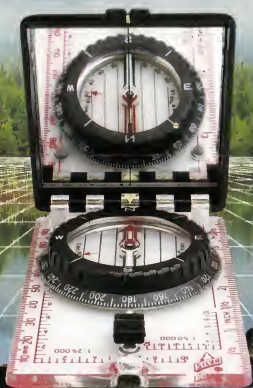


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